

Government That Works!

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET REVIEW

**TOWNSHIP OF DOVER
DOVER PARKING AUTHORITY
DOVER FIRE DISTRICTS #1 and #2**

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AUGUST, 2000



GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

The Report of the Township of Dover, Dover Parking Authority, and the Dover Fire Districts #1 & #2

New Jerseyans deserve the best government their tax dollars can provide. Governor Whitman is committed to making state government leaner, smarter and more responsive by bringing a common sense approach to the way government does business. It means taxpayers should get a dollar's worth of service for every dollar they send to government, whether it goes to Trenton, their local town hall or school board. Government on all levels must stop thinking that money is the solution to their problems and start examining how they spend the money they now have. It is time for government to do something different.

Of major concern is the rising cost of local government. There is no doubt that local government costs and the property taxes that pay for them have been rising steadily over the past decade. Prior to Governor Whitman's taking office in 1994, the state had never worked as closely with towns to examine what is behind those costs. That is why she created the Local Government Budget Review (LGBR) program. Its mission is simple: to help local governments and school boards find savings and efficiencies without compromising the delivery of services to the public.

The LGBR program utilizes an innovative approach combining the expertise of professionals, primarily from the Departments of Treasury, Community Affairs and Education, with team leaders who are experienced local government managers. In effect, it gives local governments a comprehensive management review and consulting service by the state at no cost to them. To find those "cost drivers" in local government, teams review all aspects of local government operation, looking for ways to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

In addition, teams also document those state regulations and mandates which place burden on local governments without value-added benefits and suggest, on behalf of local officials, which ones should be modified or eliminated. Teams also look for "best practices" and innovative ideas that deserve recognition and that other communities may want to emulate.

Based upon the dramatic success of the program and the number of requests for review services, in July, 1997, Governor Whitman ordered the expansion of the program, tripling its number of teams in an effort to reach more communities and school districts. The ultimate goal is to provide assistance to local government that results in meaningful property tax relief to the citizens of New Jersey.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

In order for a town, county or school district to participate in the Local Government Budget Review program, a majority of the elected officials must request the help of the review team through a resolution. There is a practical reason for this: to participate, the governing body must agree to make all personnel and records available to the review team, and agree to an open public presentation and discussion of the review team's findings and recommendations.

As part of each review, team members interview each elected official, as well as employees, appointees, members of the public, contractors and any other appropriate individuals. The review teams examine current collective bargaining agreements, audit reports, public offering statements, annual financial statements, the municipal code and independent reports and recommendations previously developed for the governmental entities, and other relative information. The review team physically visits and observes the work procedures and operations throughout the governmental entity to observe employees in the performance of their duties.

In general, the review team received full cooperation and assistance of all employees and elected officials. That cooperation and assistance was testament to the willingness, on the part of most, to embrace recommendations for change. Those officials and employees who remain skeptical of the need for change or improvement will present a significant challenge for those committed to embracing the recommendations outlined in this report.

Where possible, the potential financial impact of an issue or recommendation is provided in this report. The recommendations do not all have a direct or immediate impact on the budget or the tax rate. In particular, the productivity enhancement values identified in this report do not necessarily reflect actual cash dollars to the municipality, but do represent the cost of the entity's current operations and an opportunity to define the value of improving upon such operations. The estimates have been developed in an effort to provide the entity an indication of the potential magnitude of each issue and the savings, productivity enhancement, or cost to the community. We recognize that all of these recommendations cannot be accomplished immediately and that some of the savings will occur only in the first year. Many of these suggestions will require negotiations through the collective bargaining process. We believe, however, that these estimates are conservative and achievable.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET REVIEW
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
TOWNSHIP OF DOVER**

Township Committee

The township should consider discontinuing providing health benefits to committee members for an annual savings of \$42,791.

Administration

It is recommended that the township establish a workgroup to update the existing codification and establish a plan to more effectively address the record keeping requirements of the township. We estimated the cost of document imaging technology and seasonal labor to be \$27,800.

More closely estimating the tax collection rate in the budget preparation process would reduce the local tax levy \$2,031,211.

More closely estimating miscellaneous revenue in the budget preparation process would reduce the local tax levy \$3,845,104.

Improving the competitive investment of available balances is estimated to increase interest income \$9,549.

Tax Collection

Revise the schedule of part-time employees to improve office coverage. Hire one additional full-time employee. We estimate the fully-loaded costs to be \$53,160.

The township should consider providing additional training to the staff on the computer software they use and contact the software vendor to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses on the system at a cost of \$1,000.

Tax Assessing

It is recommended the township hire two full-time staff members to fill the existing vacancies in the assessor's office. We estimate the fully-loaded cost at \$70,000. We recommend training needs and record maintenance needs be addressed at a yearly expense of \$1,000.

Technology

Add one staff person experienced in hardware and software support. We estimate the fully-loaded cost at \$50,000. Explore the possibility of a shared MIS department with the board of education.

It is also recommended the township provide a training budget to the data processing office at an expense of \$1,000.

Personnel

Revise the procedure for random drug testing to minimize disruption to the workday. Include law enforcement staff in random testing at a cost of \$3,400.

Workers' Compensation Claims

Move the workers' compensation office and safety coordination functions to the personnel office. Provide the office with a fax machine at an initial cost of \$850, plus \$250 annually.

Labor Contracts

It is recommended the township establish a \$15,000 cap on sick leave buy back. It is also recommended that the practice of allowing employees to take the time off while remaining active and receiving benefits be eliminated for a potential savings of \$25,830.

The township should negotiate and adopt, where appropriate, the "quartermaster" system for all employees. Additionally, it is recommended the contract provision concerning cleaning of uniforms be clarified for a potential savings of \$97,650.

Insurance

Offer a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) for health benefits. Establishing it as the basic plan for computing premium co-pays would save approximately \$180,150.

Engineering and Community Development

It is recommended the township require all staff to use basic word processing to prepare their own correspondence and discontinue dictation of telephone messages and file notes. We estimate the cost of additional PCs at \$10,000. Productivity will be enhanced by approximately \$43,680.

The zoning board should use township staff expertise when reviewing applications and discontinue hiring an outside engineering consultant, saving \$20,000.

Make the position of zoning officer full-time at an estimated cost of \$30,000 - \$35,000, and reorganize the zoning office staff to provide sufficient time for the job functions.

Discontinue providing additional pay to the township engineer for planning board duties, saving \$25,000.

Reassign building maintenance workers to a department willing to supervise the work, and reorganize work responsibilities. The primary responsibility for routine maintenance in each of these buildings can be assigned to one of the employees for a savings of \$79,480. It is also recommended that the township contract out janitorial services.

Separate the emergency management coordinator position from other positions, and evaluate the duties of both the emergency management coordinator and deputy. We estimate the additional expense to be \$10,000.

Review specifications for specialty vehicles to avoid purchasing luxury items. This would have saved \$6,000 on the emergency management coordinator's vehicle.

Return the code enforcement position to full-time status to ensure inspections are being done. We estimated the expense at \$45,000.

Discontinue using a consultant to administer the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for a savings of \$28,000, and use funds to employ an entry-level clerical staff person to handle various tasks at an expense of \$25,000 - \$28,000.

Uniform Construction Code (UCC)

Hire additional staff at an estimated cost of \$150,000 to complete the required inspections. Periodically review third party inspection costs to assure they are competitive.

Upgrade the management of records and computer technology at an estimated cost of \$11,000.

Health and Human Services

Public Assistance

Closing the PTAF I account would produce one-time revenue of \$16,852.

Consolidating the welfare operation with the county would result in savings of \$178,215 and a revenue loss of \$10,000 from an interlocal agreement.

Health and Vital Statistics

Recreate the board of health as an advisory board, and discontinue the legal service contract for savings of \$6,000.

Abolishing the food handling and vending machine licenses will reduce revenue by \$8,055, but be a more efficient use of staff time, saving \$4,000.

Compliance with the statute regarding the dog canvass and enforcement of the dog-licensing ordinance will result in a net increase in revenue of \$50,800.

Fees for the various animal shelter services should be increased at least to cover costs. Ultimately, the shelter operation should be transferred to the county, saving the township \$6,531.

Youth Services

Summer program fee increases could increase revenue \$20,000.

The youth center should have background reports done for each staff candidate at an estimated cost of \$250.

Public Works

Discontinue the position of public works coordinator at savings of \$64,936.

Sanitation and Recycling

Establish a bulk trash collection schedule to improve efficiency at once every other month. The township savings are estimated at \$8,441.

Establish and enforce a policy of not returning to a trash route once completed for trash set out late for savings of \$10,125.

Evaluate dumpster routes for conversion to automated trash containers to improve efficiency. Discontinue the summertime twice per week collection at a saving of \$110,000.

Combine the sanitation and recycling supervision under one supervisor with two assistants for savings of \$115,309.

Staffing non-automated sanitation trucks with one driver and one laborer, similar to the recycling trucks, would save \$156,800.

Revising the recycling collection to once every other week would save \$867,053.

Transfer Station

The township should stop work on the proposed transfer station. Not building would potentially save \$932,000 in capital costs and \$187,785 in annual operating costs. If needed, the facility should be built as a regional facility and sited to use less expensive transportation options.

Vehicle Maintenance

Consolidate the supervision of the police and public works vehicle maintenance operations for savings of \$70,259.

Purchasing the 87-octane fuel specified by the vehicle manufacturers rather than the 89-octane fuel will save \$5,342.

Reclassifying the sign shop “helper” as a laborer position rather than as a truck driver position, will save \$1,926 per year.

Asserting claims against those responsible for accident damage will bring in an estimated \$13,943 in reimbursements.

Including the sign shop supervisor in the final inspection before street acceptance could save an estimated \$1,000 - \$2,000 per subdivision.

Roads

Reclassify one road supervisor as an assistant supervisor for an estimated saving of \$6,000.

Rent Leveling Board

Discontinue hiring separate legal and accounting staff saving \$23,515. The necessary legal and accounting work should be assigned to the township attorney and finance office.

Prosecutor

The prosecutor should review the practice of retaining discovery fees on State Police cases with the township attorney and NJ Attorney General. If this practice were discontinued the township would receive an additional \$1,220.

Police

Revising the method of taking non-emergency police reports will enhance productivity by \$105,120.

Increasing fees for police reports and discovery to cover the cost of producing the reports will enhance revenue by \$18,600.

Acquiring a document imaging system to assist with records management will cost an estimated \$35,000.

Police supervisors should be given opportunities to attend management training at one of the nationally recognized programs. The cost is \$500 and the time allotted for the training.

Revising the false alarm threshold to three would enhance revenue by \$22,400.

Establishing a fee of \$10 for alarm registration will enhance revenue by \$12,000.

Establish a fleet replacement program and maintain a vehicle replacement consistent with the fleet replacement plan. The township could save \$28,000 by selling or transferring 35 older police vehicles.

Contracting with Ocean County for all call-taking and dispatch services will save at least \$768,869, plus avoid \$1 million in relocation costs and save the fire district \$112,000 in new wages.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Billing insurers for the cost of providing EMS response would increase township revenue \$1,004,958 annually at an initial cost of \$25,000.

Recreation

Fee increases for both adult and youth programs could increase revenue \$14,000.

Fee increases at the ice rink would permit a reserve for replacement to be established. A return to staffing levels before the experiment with roller-skating during the summer at the ice rink would save \$52,860.

Waterfront

It is recommended the township recreation director investigate the use of lightning detectors at an expense of \$800.

Golf Utility

Increasing greens fees by \$2 will enhance revenue by \$107,616.

The township should investigate the use of lightning detectors, at a cost of \$800, for the golf course, and generally review the golf course emergency procedures relating to lightning.

Parking Authority

By leasing advertising space on meter posts the authority could enhance revenue by \$21,600.

Fire Services

Fire District #1

It is recommended the district require commissioners receiving health benefits to reimburse the district for the premium, saving \$20,826.

Not providing cellular telephones at public expense in Fire District #1 will save \$3,600 annually.

Not purchasing unneeded turnout gear for the fire commissioners in District #1 will save \$7,200.

Enforcing a business-use-only policy for chiefs' cars will save \$3,226 in District #1 and an undetermined amount in District #2.

Fire District #2

It is recommended the district require commissioners receiving health benefits to reimburse the district for the premium, saving \$24,120.

District #2 should consider joining the State Health Benefits Plan or the township group for employee health benefits in Fire District #1.

Fire Stations and Apparatus

Discontinue renting the stations located on Water Street and Robbins Street, saving \$46,534. The equipment that continues to be needed should be relocated to the sub-station on Hooper Avenue.

Do not replace eight engines and two ladder trucks, saving \$350,000 annually for five years. Eliminate the two District #1 administrative vehicles and compensate through mileage reimbursement.

Future of the Fire Service

The fire districts need to be reorganized as one entity, as either a township department or a single district, reducing administrative staff and using existing payroll, accounting, and other administrative support functions available from the township. We estimate reorganizing will save \$251,315.

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS, STATE AID,
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE TOWNSHIP OF DOVER
DOVER FIRE DISTRICT #1 and #2
DOVER PARKING AUTHORITY**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>One-time Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Township Committee				
Discontinue providing benefits to committee members		\$42,791		\$42,791
Administration				
Imaging technology to address record retention problem		(\$27,800)		
Estimate the tax collection rate more closely		\$2,031,211		
Estimate miscellaneous revenue more closely		\$3,845,104		
Improve the competitive investment of available balances		\$9,549		\$5,858,064
Tax Collection				
Hire one additional full-time employee		(\$53,160)		
Provide additional training on computer software		(\$1,000)		(\$54,160)
Tax Assessing				
Hire two full-time staff members to fill existing vacancies		(\$70,000)		
Address training and record maintenance needs		(\$1,000)		(\$71,000)
Technology				
Hire staff person experienced in hardware and software		(\$50,000)		
Provide training budget to the data processing office		(\$1,000)		(\$51,000)
Personnel				
Include law enforcement officers in random drug testing		(\$3,400)		(\$3,400)
Workers' Compensation Claims				
Provide the office with a fax machine	(\$850)	(\$250)		(\$1,100)

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS, STATE AID,
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
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DOVER FIRE DISTRICT #1 and #2
DOVER PARKING AUTHORITY**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>One-time Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Labor Contracts				
Eliminate time off while remaining an active employee receiving benefits			\$25,830	
Clarify contract provision providing cleaning for uniforms			\$97,650	
Insurance				
Offer Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) as coverage option		\$180,150		
				\$180,150
Engineering and Community Development				
Purchase additional PCs	(\$10,000)			
Enhanced productivity from purchase of PCs		\$43,680		
Discontinue hiring an outside engineering consultant		\$20,000		
Make zoning officer position full-time		(\$35,000)		
Discontinue additional pay to the township engineer		\$25,000		
Assign routine building maintenance to one employee		\$79,480		
Separate emergency management coordinator position		(\$10,000)		
Review specifications for specialty vehicles	\$6,000			
Return code enforcement position to full-time status		(\$45,000)		
Eliminate consultant for CDBG program		\$28,000		
Use funds to employ an entry level clerical		(\$28,000)		
				\$74,160
Uniform Construction Code				
Hire additional staff to complete inspections		(\$150,000)		
Upgrade records management and computer technology	(\$11,000)			
				(\$161,000)
Health and Human Services/Welfare				
<i>Public Assistance</i>				
Close the PTAF I account	\$16,852			

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS, STATE AID,
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE TOWNSHIP OF DOVER
DOVER FIRE DISTRICT #1 and #2
DOVER PARKING AUTHORITY**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>One-time Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Consolidate the welfare operation with the county		\$168,215		\$185,067
<i>Health and Vital Statistics</i>				
Recreate board of health as advisory board & discontinue legal service contract	\$6,000			
Abolish food handling and vending machine licenses		(\$4,055)		
Comply with dog canvass and enforcement of dog licensing ordinance		\$50,800		
Transfer animal shelter operation to county		\$6,531		\$59,276
<i>Youth Services</i>				
Increase fees for summer program		\$20,000		
Background reports for each staff candidate		(\$250)		\$19,750
Public Works				
Discontinue the position of public works coordinator		\$64,936		\$64,936
<i>Sanitation and Recycling</i>				
Establish a bulk trash collection schedule		\$8,441		
Establish policy for not returning to a trash route for late trash pickup		\$10,125		
Discontinue summertime twice per week pickup		\$110,000		
Combine sanitation and recycling supervision		\$115,309		
Staff non-automated sanitation trucks with one driver and one laborer		\$156,800		
Revise the recycling collection		\$867,053		\$1,267,728
<i>Transfer Station</i>				
Discontinue work on the proposed transfer station			\$187,785	
One-time capital savings from not building			\$932,000	

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS, STATE AID,
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE TOWNSHIP OF DOVER
DOVER FIRE DISTRICT #1 and #2
DOVER PARKING AUTHORITY**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>One-time Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
<i>Vehicle Maintenance</i>				
Consolidate supervision of police & public works vehicle maintenance		\$70,259		
Purchase 87-Octane Fuel		\$5,342		
Reclassify the sign shop helper to laborer		\$1,926		
Assert insurance claims		\$13,943		
Include sign shop supervisor in final inspection		\$1,000		
				\$92,470
<i>Roads</i>				
Reclassify one road supervisor as an assistant supervisor		\$6,000		
				\$6,000
Rent Leveling Board				
Discontinue hiring separate legal and accounting staff		\$23,515		
				\$23,515
Prosecutor				
Discontinue retaining discovery fees		\$1,220		
				\$1,220
Police				
Revise method of taking non-emergency police reports		\$105,120		
Increase fees for police reports and discovery		\$18,600		
Acquire document imaging system	(\$35,000)			
Police supervisors management training		(\$500)		
Revise the false alarm threshold to three		\$22,400		
Establish a fee of \$10 for alarm registration		\$12,000		
Establish fleet replacement program		\$28,000		
Contract for call-taking and dispatch services		\$768,869		
Cost to county for taking over dispatching		(\$112,000)		
Savings from not relocating police dispatch	\$600,000			

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS, STATE AID,
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE TOWNSHIP OF DOVER
DOVER FIRE DISTRICT #1 and #2
DOVER PARKING AUTHORITY**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>One-time Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Savings from not relocating fire dispatch	\$400,000			
Savings from not hiring five new fire employees		\$227,000		
				\$2,034,489
EMS				
Bill insurers for the cost of providing EMS	(\$25,000)	\$1,004,958		
				\$979,958
Recreation				
Increase fees for both adult and youth programs		\$14,000		
Return to former staffing levels		\$52,860		
				\$66,860
<i>Waterfront</i>				
Investigate use of lightning detectors		(\$800)		
				(\$800)
<i>Golf Utility</i>				
Increase greens fees		\$107,616		
Investigate use of lightning detectors		(\$800)		
				\$106,816
Parking Authority				
Lease advertising space on meter posts		\$21,600		
				\$21,600
Fire Services				
<i>Fire District #1</i>				
Commissioner reimbursement for health benefits premium		\$20,826		
Discontinue cellular telephones service		\$3,600		
Discontinue purchase of unneeded turnout gear		\$7,200		
Establish a business-use-only policy for chiefs' vehicles		\$3,226		
				\$34,852

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS, STATE AID,
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE TOWNSHIP OF DOVER
DOVER FIRE DISTRICT #1 and #2
DOVER PARKING AUTHORITY**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>One-time Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
<i>Fire District #2</i>				
Commissioner reimbursement for health benefits premium		\$24,120		\$24,120
<i>Fire Stations and Apparatus</i>				
Discontinue leasing of unneeded firehouses		\$46,534		
Eliminate the replacement of eight engines and two ladders		\$350,000		\$396,534
<i>Future of the Fire Service</i>				
Reduce administrative staff		\$251,315		\$251,315
Total Recommended Savings	\$947,002	\$10,502,209	\$1,243,265	\$11,449,211
*\$1,243,265 not included in savings of \$11,449,211.				
Total Amount Raised for Municipal Tax				\$24,920,783
Savings as a % of 1998 Municipal Tax				46%
Total Budget				\$56,617,426
Savings as a % of 1998 Budget				20%
Total State Aid				\$10,572,264
Savings as a % of 1998 State Aid				108%

**COMPARISON OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS, STATE AID,
AND LOCAL TAX RATE WITH RECOMMENDED REDUCTIONS IN
THE TOWNSHIP OF DOVER
DOVER FIRE DISTRICT #1 and #2
DOVER PARKING AUTHORITY**

<u>Areas Involving Monetary Recommendations</u>	<u>One-time Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>Annual Savings/ Expense</u>	<u>*Potential Savings</u>	<u>Totals</u>
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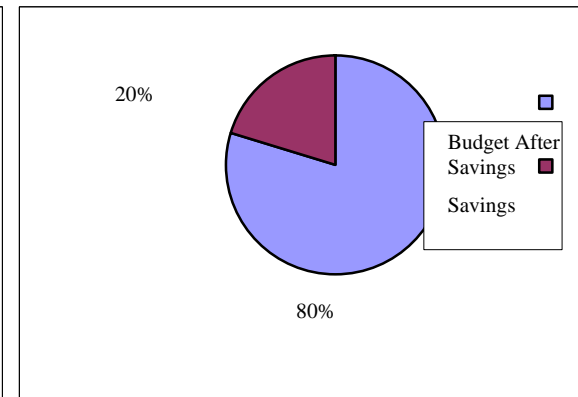
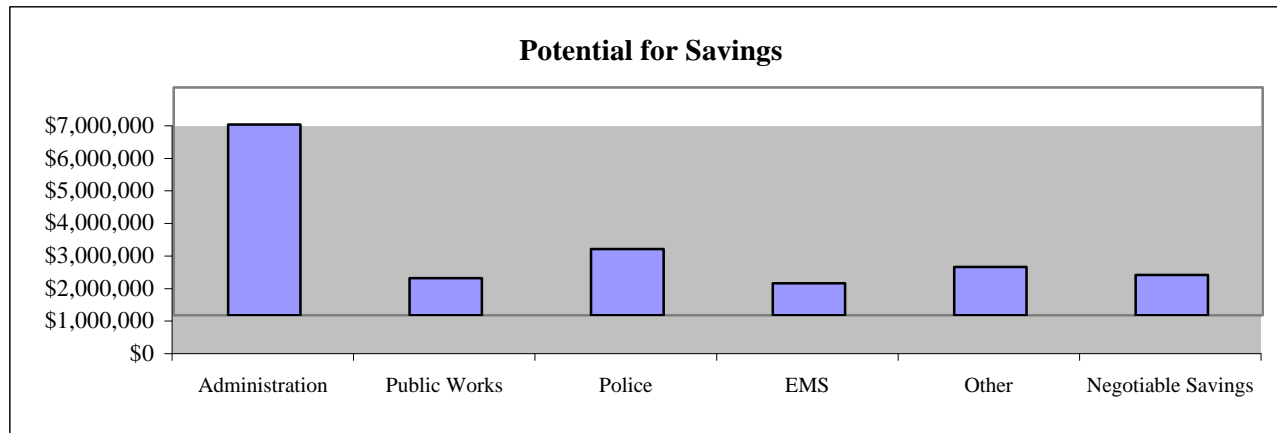


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COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Township of Dover is a 44 square mile community in Ocean County. The historic downtown area of Toms River serves as the county seat. Located along the Atlantic Ocean and Barnegat Bay, the township is approximately midway between New York City and Atlantic City, and 60 miles east of Philadelphia. Brick Township and Lakewood Township border Dover on the north. Manchester Township lies to the west. Berkley Township and the Toms River lie to the south. The barrier island and bay front areas to the east have many desirable waterfront neighborhoods.

Historically, the economy of the area was based on the fishing and recreation along the coast, and farming and poultry inland. More recently, the township experienced rapid growth, changing this previously rural, seasonal community to a suburban community with extensive commercial/retail activity.

Recent estimates report Dover's year round population at 88,000, swelling to approximately 125,000 in the summer. The 1990 census population was 76,371. Approximately 25% were age 55 or older, and approximately 27% were under 20 years old.

The community's racial makeup is 97% Caucasian. The minority population is primarily Asian and Black.

The 1990 census reported the Dover workforce to be approximately 35,000. Overwhelmingly they drove alone to work. About 13% carpooled. A small number used public transportation. Approximately 75% of those working commuted less than 35 minutes to their employment. Approximately 12% commuted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. Anecdotal reports indicate that these individuals generally are driving to northern New Jersey and New York.

One-third of the working citizens of Dover are employed in managerial, professional and executive occupations. About 36% are employed in sales, technical, or administrative support occupations. The balance is predominantly employed in service occupations or as machine operators, assembly workers, transporters of materials, and in labor occupations.

The Garden State Parkway, US Route 9, and State Routes 35, 37 and 70 serve the township. New Jersey Transit serves the township with various bus routes, and the Township Parking Authority operates a regional park/ride facility. New Jersey Transit passenger rail is available nearby in Bay Head. Bell Atlantic, GPU Energy, United Water, and Dover Municipal Utility Authority (sewage collection) provide utility services. The Ocean County MUA provides sewage treatment.

The recreational activities associated with the bay and ocean continue to provide a significant economic impact; however, most businesses operate year round.

The township contains regional shopping centers, including the Ocean County Mall and the Seacourt Pavilion. Reportedly, the downtown Toms River business area experienced economic difficulty a few years ago and had many unoccupied buildings; however, as of this review, the business area appeared to be active and nearly all buildings occupied. The NJ State Development and Redevelopment Plan has identified Dover primarily as a suburban planning area with some environmentally sensitive planning areas. The Toms River downtown area is identified as an existing regional center.

The township also is the county seat, hosting the courthouse, county administrative buildings, library, jail, county college, vo-tech. high school and several other facilities. Additionally, Community Memorial Hospital, a YMCA, and many religious and civic organizations are located in Dover.

GOVERNMENT

Scope of Review

The Dover Township Committee requested this review jointly with the Toms River Regional Board of Education.

As fieldwork began, the team asked the officials of Fire Districts 1 and 2, the Dover Parking Authority, and the Dover MUA if they wanted to participate in the review. Both fire districts and the parking authority agreed to participate. The Dover MUA Executive Director reported that the MUA Commissioners declined to participate.

Accordingly, this review is limited to the agencies agreeing to participate. We did briefly review certain public documents from the Dover MUA in order to fully understand the scope of governmental operations in Dover Township. Suggestions as to areas under the MUA's control that the township committee or the public may wish to review on their own are made in the Dover MUA section of this report.

We commend the fire district commissioners from both districts, the parking authority, the township committee, and board of education for inviting this review.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS

Township

A township committee form of government governs the township. This provides for five committee members elected for three-year staggered terms. The committee members select one of their members as mayor. Together, the committee acts both as the legislative and executive arms of the municipal government. The committee has employed an administrator, several department heads, and other staff members to run the daily activities of the municipality.

The committee member terms are staggered such that two members run in each of two years, and the fifth member runs in the third year. Annual elections, a feature of this form of government, were identified by both elected and staff people as an obstacle to operating with less political interference.

During interviews, some individuals expressed concern that the township committee form of government had outgrown its ability to operate efficiently in a municipality as large as Dover. Others felt strongly that the township committee form is operating as desired in the township.

The team heard anecdotes of directives from elected officials affecting the daily activities at all levels of the organization. The result is that many activities which should be handled administratively within a department often seem to need approvals from elected officials.

Typically, voters select candidates during the June primary election to appear on the November general election ballot. The terms of office begin the following January. The township had 50,744 registered voters eligible to vote in the 1997 general election. In the 1997 November election, 27,613 votes were cast for township committee candidates.

Fire Districts

The voters of the township elected to create two fire districts to provide fire protection services in the township. Statutorily, voters elect the fire district commissioners during an election scheduled in late February each year. Similar to the township committee, the commission members serve staggered three-year terms. During the February, 1998 fire district election, voters cast 1,701 votes for candidates. This represents 3.4% of the registered voters and 6.2% of the voters who voted in the previous general election.

Unlike the township budget, but similar to the school district budget, the fire district budget is included on the ballot for voter approval. During the 1998 fire district election, voters cast 1,790 votes on the budget question in both districts.

The low voter turnout is typical of fire district elections with which the team is acquainted. Several township officials noted that the low turnout was in large part due to the 'odd' timing of an election in February, causing voters to forget to vote. Others noted that those who did vote were those directly involved in the volunteer companies.

Changing the election date for fire district elections is included as an item in the statutory reform section.

Parking Authority and Municipal Utility Authority

The parking authority and MUA are autonomous agencies created by previous township committees. The township committee appoints authority board members for five-year terms. Once created, authorities become legally separate entities and operate independently of the township government.

This report is divided into sections covering the township government, each fire district, and the parking authority. At times, the reader will find sections that overlap due to the closely related nature of some operations. For example, radio dispatching in Dover covers both police and fire operations.

I. BEST PRACTICES

A very important part of the Local Government Budget Review report is the Best Practices section. During the course of every review, each review team identifies procedures, programs and practices, which are noteworthy and deserving of recognition. Best practices are presented to encourage replication in communities and schools throughout the state. By implementing these practices, municipalities and school districts can benefit from the Local Government Budget Review process and possibly save considerable expense on their own.

Just as we are not able to identify every area of potential cost savings, the review team cannot cite every cost-effective effort. The following are those best practices recognized for cost and/or service delivery effectiveness.

Dover Township has made extensive use of labor from inmates from the Ocean County Jail and from individuals sentenced to community service. Projects have included painting, and repair and grounds maintenance on a variety of municipal parks and buildings. While precise figures are not available, it appears that the township has saved significant sums by using prison and community service labor to complete needed work at little cost to the taxpayer.

The use of a third party contractor by the township to receive and post tax payments is saving the township a great deal of overtime expense. It has also allowed the tax staff to work more efficiently by using its talents on non-routine transactions. While the lock box system has had some glitches, we feel the township and the contractor can correct them. The shortcomings are more than offset by the savings to the township.

II. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE/FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this section of the review report is to identify opportunities for change and to make recommendations that will result in operations that are more efficient and provide financial savings to the municipality and its taxpayers.

In its study, the review team found the municipality makes a conscious effort to control costs and to explore areas of cost-saving efficiencies in its operations. We identify some of these in the Best Practices section of this report. Others are noted in the findings that follow. We commend the municipality for its efforts. The review team did find areas where additional savings could be generated, and has made recommendations for change that will result in reduced costs or increased revenue.

Where possible, a dollar value has been assigned to each recommendation to provide a measure of importance or magnitude to illustrate cost savings. The time it will take to implement each recommendation will vary. It is not possible to expect the total projected savings to be achieved in a short period of time. Nevertheless, the total savings and revenue enhancements should be viewed as an attainable goal. The impact will be reflected in the immediate budget, future budgets, and the tax rate(s). Some recommendations may be subject to collective bargaining considerations and, therefore, may not be implemented until the next round of negotiations. The total savings will lead to a reduction in tax rates resulting from improvements in budgeting, cash management, cost control, and revenue enhancement.

A. TOWNSHIP OF DOVER

Township Committee

The township committee members are each paid a salary of \$8,921 per year. The 1998 total salary and wage expense was \$44,605. In addition, each member is receiving health, dental, and prescription coverage from the township. Four of the members are receiving full family coverage from the township. The cost of the benefits in 1998 was \$42,791. In light of the part-time nature of the township committee, we believe committee members should reimburse the township for these benefits or decline to take them.

Recommendation:

We recommend the committee members either reimburse the township for the health benefits premium or decline to take coverage.

Cost Savings: \$42,791

The township committee office has two clerk-typists as staff members. The 1998 salaries and wages were \$39,636 for these staff members. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$72,513.

While officially reporting to the township administrator, these staff members served as receptionists and secretaries for the committee members in their official capacity. They also assisted various community groups make arrangements for public celebrations and parades. The staff reported that their duties did not include working on any political functions or any private business of committee members.

The other expenses of the committee office were embedded in the expenses of the clerk/administrator's office, and could not be quantified.

ADMINISTRATION

The township has a full-time township administrator who also functions as the township clerk. In addition to coordinating the various departments of the township, the administrator has several divisions under her direct supervision. These divisions are the clerk's office, rent leveling, personnel and the office of the township committee.

According to the township code, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is within the administrator's office; however, in practice this office is in the engineering department. This report discusses the OEM function and its placement within the administrative organization, in the engineering/community development section of this report.

The administrator's office consists of two persons, the administrator/clerk and a secretary. The township clerk's office has a staff of eight. Two of these employees, the back-up switchboard operator and the mail clerk, are part-time. There is a deputy township clerk, a senior clerk typist, two clerk typists, and one full-time switchboard operator in addition to the part-time personnel. The rent leveling office has a part-time secretary. The personnel division has a personnel officer and a secretary.

Total annual expenditure in 1998 for the administrator/clerk's office, not including personnel, rent leveling or the township committee, was \$352,275 for salary and wages, including \$36,996 in overtime. The other expenses were \$163,519. The total expenditure was \$515,794. Benefits cost an additional \$160,725, provided in other parts of the budget. The other expenses include \$105,000 in legal services for labor negotiations.

Codification

A municipality's adoption of an ordinance is a significant act establishing legal obligations for citizens and businesses. Ordinances also communicate public policy to those affected. It is important that citizens and others affected have a reasonable means of knowing the requirements of the township ordinances.

While the township's code was very extensive, the team noted a number of provisions that appeared to contradict current practice in Dover, and some archaic regulations, indicating that the code had not been updated in some time. The staff reported that code updating had a low priority due to the press of other business.

The code is serviceable, and is supplemented with new material, but older sections need to be updated to reflect current practice and the evolution of relevant law.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township attorney head a workgroup to review each chapter of the code, and recommend township committee action where changes are warranted.

The township may wish to consider working with its codification firm to create and maintain an electronic version of the code accessible from the web site.

Records Storage

Many staff members indicated that the various offices generate an overwhelming amount of documents. In the administrator/clerk's office, room for additional filing cabinets is limited. The township has had some documents put on microfiche. Based on the numerous comments made to the team on this issue, it has evidently not served to reduce the volume of paper files. The team learned that the various departments in town hall use the vault, with no one specifically responsible for reviewing files for removal. According to the deputy township clerk, she did not recall ever submitting a record destruction form to the State Library. The township may wish to consider using document imaging to store non-permanent documents electronically. We understand programs are available which meet the requirements of the State Library, Division of Archives. Microfiche or paper records are still required for archival storage. The team understands the police department has reviewed an imaging system in anticipation of using it for police records. The team understands imaging systems cost approximately \$25,000. Some imaging systems appear able to create both an electronic file and a microfiche.

The team is also familiar with municipalities that have successfully used college students as summer help to cull records. We estimate that a seasonal employee hired for eight weeks at \$10 per hour will cost \$2,800.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township implement a plan to address its expansive number of documents. Such a plan should include a review of the record retention requirements with a responsible person in each department. We recommend the use of seasonal help to cull records and clearly label boxes with destruction dates. Additionally, we recommend the township consider imaging technology to address its record retention problems. We did not attempt to compute savings in staff time spent locating records.

Value Added Expense: \$27,800

General Observations

The staff sees the township administrator/clerk's office as the general information center for the town. Many of its duties are statutory. The deputy clerk handles nearly all of the duties normally assigned to the township clerk, due to the clerk having the full-time duties of township

administrator. The deputy handles the work related to the township committee meetings and takes the minutes as well. She had also been handling the updating of the telephone system, but that has recently been reassigned to the data processing (MIS) department. The clerk's office also handles the bookings and calendar for the various meeting rooms in town hall.

The MIS department maintains the township web site and e-mail account. MIS forwards inquiries received via e-mail to the clerk's office or other appropriate personnel for response. This system appears to create a significant amount of handling for e-mail messages. The township may wish to consider having the e-mail handled in the administrator's office rather than MIS.

A remarkable number of those interviewed noted that the administrator was professional, competent, and fair, but needed to obtain greater latitude from the committee to function more effectively as the administrator. Others noted that the finance officer was too involved in administrative matters outside the finance department.

General Budgeting

Dover Township uses the state fiscal year, beginning on July 1. The township opted to switch from a calendar year budget to a fiscal year budget in 1992 pursuant to a then new state law. The law was intended to help municipalities receiving large amounts of their state aid late in the calendar year avoid the expense of borrowing money for operating expenses while waiting for the state aid payments.

One feature of the law provided for the issuance of long-term debt (fiscal year adjustment bonds) for operating expenses during the six-month transition period.

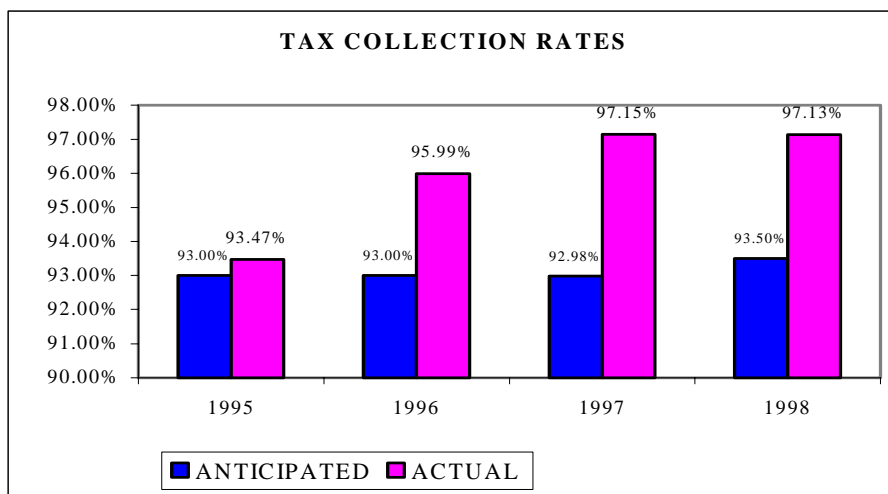
According to various people the team interviewed, in 1992 Dover was facing a budgetary crisis due, in part, to a series of years where decisions were made to authorize the deferral of school taxes on the annual financial statement. This practice treats tax receipts due to the school district as municipal surplus. This increase in surplus funds is in turn, used to balance the municipal budget. In 1992, additional deferrals were no longer available and the township faced a significant increase in the local purpose property tax not only for its own expenses, but to repay school taxes that were unfunded. The team was told a tax increase was not politically acceptable. The township committee elected the option to switch to a state fiscal year, and finance \$17,225,000 in operating expenses with fiscal year adjustment bonds over 15 years. This bond continues to be the largest item of debt for the township. As of June 30, 1998, the fiscal year adjustment bond principal balance was \$16,300,000 or 37% of the \$44,466,000 total.

A review of the municipal surplus from 1995 through 1998 shows the surplus has more than doubled from \$7.8 million to \$17.2 million. The township has generated an increasing surplus primarily from the taxes from increasing ratables in the township as well as by conservative tax collection and miscellaneous revenue estimates.

Estimated Tax Collections

The township is required to establish a reserve for uncollected taxes on the entire tax levy, including the school, county and fire levies. Accordingly, the dollar value of the difference between the estimated collection rate and the actual collection rate, up or down, is much greater than if calculated on the municipal levy alone.

In the 1998 budget, the total reserve for uncollected taxes (the difference between the estimated collections and 100%) was \$8,361,823. The township estimated that tax collections would be 93.5 % of the amount levied. The actual collection rate for 1998 was \$4,807,738 higher, or 97.13%. Prudence dictates that one conservatively estimate tax collections, as fluctuations in economic conditions can cause tax appeals, bankruptcies, and financial difficulties which reduce tax payments. If estimated collections are too ambitious, even minor collection problems can cause significant municipal budget and tax increases.



The tax collections were 95.99% in 1996 and over 97% for 1997 and 1998. The team feels that the township could realize a tax reduction with minimal risk by estimating its tax collections at 2% to 3% below the prior year actual. An estimated collection rate of 95% would have reduced the 1998 taxes by \$2,031,211. We recognize that anticipating a greater collection rate will result in a more modest growth in surplus in subsequent years.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township increase the anticipated tax collection rate to 2% to 3% below the prior year actual collection rate and decrease the appropriation for “reserve for uncollected taxes” in its budget.

Cost Savings: \$2,031,211

Miscellaneous Revenue

Miscellaneous revenue is all revenue not derived from surplus, current taxes, dedicated revenue or delinquent taxes. It includes local fees for various permits, licenses or activities, state and federal aid and grants.

An analysis of the township's budget projections for miscellaneous revenue compared to actual for the years 1994 through 1997 shows that the miscellaneous revenue projections were underestimated from just under 12% to just over 17%. In dollars this represents a range from just under \$6.2 million to just over \$9.2 million. While the team recognizes that miscellaneous revenue can fluctuate from year to year, we believe that the township should more closely examine its estimates for miscellaneous revenue it anticipates in the budget. In addition, it should review items of revenue not anticipated in the budget, and where appropriate include recurring items in its annual budget. If the difference between the actual and estimated miscellaneous revenue were reduced to 10%, the 1998 municipal tax levy would have been reduced by \$3,845,104.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township more closely estimate its miscellaneous revenue based on prior year's actual experience.

Revenue Enhancement: \$3,845,104

Additionally, we recommend various fees for revision in other areas of this report. Should the committee adopt those revisions, it should adjust future revenue estimates accordingly.

We recognize that the initial year new revenue is anticipated in the budget may result in undesirable tax rate fluctuations. Should the committee accept the recommendations concerning the reserve for uncollected taxes and miscellaneous revenue, they may wish to use the new revenue for one-time expenses such as capital improvements, reducing the need for additional debt.

Cash Management

The team analyzed the management of the township's cash balances. According to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the township maintains its primary banking relationship with one banking institution. During fiscal year 1998, the value of bank services provided to the township through compensating balances was \$84,990. These services include the payroll processing service. The township also maintains a relationship with the New Jersey Cash Management Fund (NJCMF), a public funds investment division of the State Treasury. The NJCMF is an investment tool for idle funds, but does not provide bank services such as check processing. Township cash balances are routinely invested in either certificates-of-deposit (CD's) which are competitively quoted among area banks, or the NJCMF. The assistant finance officer has maintained a cash flow chart detailing known large expenditures. She has effectively used this information to match investment maturities with larger expenditures. The rates obtained on the CD's are very competitive when compared to the rates offered by the NJCMF and the three-month treasury-bill rate. While the township has obtained competitive rates for its CD's, the team notes that CD's typically require a fixed term, with unattractive options for early redemption. Accordingly, one must take the time to evaluate the upcoming cash needs, and time one's investments accordingly. Additionally, one must reserve some funds for unexpected cash

requirements. The NJCMF provides greater liquidity. Redeemed funds are generally available in one business day, reducing the amount of time required for completing CD transactions and timing investments, as well as eliminating the need for a cash flow reserve.

The team performed an analysis of the current fund operating bank account. We selected this account because it represents the largest (\$4,382,407 per the 6-30-98 financial statement) amount of money not invested in CD's or the NJCMF. Our analysis compares the interest actually earned by the township from July, 1997 through June, 1998 to the earnings that would have been achieved in the NJCMF and the three-month treasury bill. The analysis shows that had the available funds (averaging \$3,176,426 per month) been invested in the NJCMF, the township would have earned an additional \$9,549 over what was earned in the operating bank account. We recognize that the NJCMF may not always provide the most competitive investment.

The other various bank accounts maintained by the township appear appropriately invested in the NJCMF or CD's and have minimal cash balances.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township competitively invest all balances in excess of those required for banking services.

Revenue Enhancement: \$9,549

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

The finance department is headed by the CFO and consists of several divisions including the tax collections, tax assessing, comptroller's office, purchasing, and data processing.

The comptroller's office includes payroll, accounting, and the CFO's office. They are located together in a crowded office, on the first floor of town hall. The offices had limited storage space and contained many boxes of records stored on the floor and furniture.

The staff in these offices include the finance officer, deputy comptroller, the assistant to the finance director, the payroll bookkeeper, a secretary, an assistant to the deputy comptroller, and a computer operator.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township consider relocating selected functions of the finance office into the meeting room adjacent to the parking authority office.

General

The staff in this office is involved with many varied duties including posting the general ledger, bank account reconciliation, posting revenue, and preparing deposits and blanket purchase orders. Some interviewed expressed frustration with other departments concerning regularly

occurring budget and purchase order problems. When we asked if training of the relevant staff would help solve the problem, we were told that the finance staff was not permitted to provide training to other departments. If true, this directive appears to be particularly short-sighted in that the shortcomings of the other departments are affecting the efficiency and morale in the finance office.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township authorize the finance staff to identify the common problems experienced in the outside departments and provide training to those departments.

Payroll

One staff member, using ADP as a payroll processing service, handles the payroll function. The township payroll operation includes preparing the golf utility payroll, but does not include the payroll for the parking authority, fire districts, or fire prevention operations.

The individual was knowledgeable about handling payroll issues and interacting with ADP. Backup support for illness and vacation is provided through cross-training with the computer operator and deputy comptroller. The cross-training appears adequate for routine payroll functions; however, staff members expressed concern that pay rate changes, monthly reports for pension deductions, and quarterly tax reports would be onerous for the backup staff to complete.

An individual other than the payroll bookkeeper handled the bookkeeping for the employer share of payroll tax and the payroll account reconciliation. This practice provides proper internal controls over this disbursement function.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the backup person for the payroll operation be regularly involved in participating in the payroll preparation through and including the filing of monthly reports.

During most of the year, approximately 550 employees have their pay processed through this office. During the summer, this increases by about 200 due to seasonal employees. Reports of time worked for each employee are prepared in each department and forwarded to payroll. Time cards, in departments where they are used, are retained in the department.

The personnel office accounts for health benefits and time off.

Since April, 1998, this office has handled the payroll for police officers hired for private traffic or security work. This is an improvement over the previous practice of having these third party payments made directly to officers by contractors.

Those on workers' compensation have only the difference between the workers' compensation payment and the employee's regular salary paid through payroll. Accordingly, both employer and employee taxes are properly calculated on payroll payments to those on workers' compensation.

The township does not offer or require direct deposit of payroll to employee bank accounts. The team was told that while the township's bank and ADP would provide the service, the CFO is opposed to providing direct deposit. The CFO reported he felt the township could obtain concessions in labor agreements in exchange for direct deposit.

Having direct deposit is a convenience for employees. It will also reduce the time required by the finance department staff to reconcile the payroll account each month and the time spent by the payroll staff in replacing lost or damaged checks. In addition, we expect that some amount of staff time is spent at banks depositing paychecks.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township offer direct deposit to current employees and require future employees to participate.

Debt Service

As of June 30, 1998, the township had \$44,466,000 (principal only) in outstanding serial bonds. As of this review, the township had no notes (short-term debt of one year or less) outstanding.

In addition to the issued debt, the township has \$449,499 authorized but not issued. The oldest active bond dates from 1977. The most recent issue was in 1998. All of the existing bonds are scheduled to be retired by the year 2012.

The golf utility debt is equally unremarkable. As of June 30, 1998, the total debt principal was \$589,000 in addition to the general debt of the township. Only \$18,949 was authorized but not issued. The oldest issue was in 1986. All existing debt is scheduled to be retired by 2005.

New Jersey law restricts general obligation municipal debt (that which is to be paid by taxpayers) to 3½% of the three-year average aggregate assessed value of the municipality. This formula ties the amount of debt municipal agencies can incur to the amount of taxable property in the municipality. Bonds issued for self-liquidating purposes, where user fees are paying all the costs, are not counted in this calculation.

As of July 1998, the township had a debt to assessed value ratio of .83%.

Moody's Investors Service, a bond-rating firm that evaluates the credit worthiness of public and private debt issues, awarded an A-1 rating to the township for its May, 1998 bond issue. The institution purchasing the bonds insured the issue, bringing the rating to Aaa. The A-1 rating indicates superior credit-worthiness and is, as a practical matter, the highest rating available without insurance to a municipality the size of Dover.

We commend the township for maintaining a low debt ratio, and a superior debt rating.

The team reviewed Dover's existing debt service to identify any opportunities for refinancing (technically known as "refunding") debt issued when interest rates were higher. Refunding opportunities are possible when the bond issuer sells its bond with an early redemption provision known as a "call feature." Experts in municipal finance have reported to the team that "calls" from eighth year on have not had a noticeable effect on the interest rate for the bonds.

The chief financial officer reported he had reviewed refunding options from time to time and found refinancing was not cost-effective. Certain older bonds with interest rates over 6% at first appeared eligible for refunding; however, the remaining principal to be paid was relatively low.

The team concurs that, as of our review, the existing debt did not present any refunding opportunities. Because the longest coupons in an issue bear the highest interest rates, a refunding opportunity may present itself in the future as the township redeems lower interest coupons.

We encourage the township to continue to include call features in each future issue, and to periodically review the various bond issues for refunding potential.

TAX COLLECTION

General

The tax office produces the tax bills, and receives tax payments for the township. When necessary, the staff prepares delinquent notices and conducts the sale of tax liens.

There are nine positions in this division of the finance department. Seven of these positions are full-time and two are part-time. There are three cashiers, one clerk, one tax searcher, clerk typist, tax lien clerk, deputy tax collector and tax collector. The office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The part-time employees work from 9:00 a.m. to either 1:00 or 2:00 p.m.

The total for salaries and wages paid in 1998 was \$256,468, including overtime of \$5,057. Benefit costs of an additional \$148,993 are located in other parts of the budget. The other expenses were \$90,000. The total department expenditures were \$346,558.

There is a good working relationship among the employees in the collector's office. This has been solidified with the hiring of a new tax collector in 1997 who promotes a team approach in managing her office. Nearly all of the employees are cross-trained and can fill in where and when needed. Even so, due to the very limited number of staff people in an office this size, any time out of the office for any employee, for whatever reason, results in a significant burden for the other employees. Staffing is discussed further in the staffing section.

There are 40,517 separate tax accounts in the township. Due to the township having converted to a fiscal year, tax bills are sent out twice a year, rather than once a year as happens in calendar-year towns. This means 81,034 tax bills are sent out annually.

Taxes are due quarterly resulting in about 162,068 transactions annually. The township uses a lock box system that handles approximately 60,400 (37.3%) of the transactions. In addition, mortgage companies submit 42,656 transactions (26.3%) through magnetic tape, leaving the staff to handle approximately 59,012 (36.4%) transactions in town hall. The lock box system is discussed in more detail later in this section.

Dividing the 40,517 accounts by the eight full-time equivalent positions results in 5,065 accounts per staff person. LGBR has used a benchmark of 3,300 accounts per staff person. Some well-run tax offices with which the team is familiar have operated at 4,000 accounts per person. At first, it would appear that the office is unusually efficient. The team is concerned that when an office handles an unusually high volume of accounts per person the staff may be overlooking important details. Tax overpayment refunds appear to be a significant work item that has been left undone for a number of years. We discuss tax overpayments further in the overpayments section of the report.

The township continues to experience land development and growth in its tax line items, increasing the volume of transactions.

Recommendations:

We recommend the schedules of the part-time employees in this division be scheduled so that both mornings and afternoons are covered rather than both being scheduled to work in the morning.

We recommend that the township hire at least one additional full-time employee and an additional part-time person for this division due to the volume of work. Assuming the full-time position is filled at approximately \$22,000 annually, plus benefits, and the part-time position can be filled at \$12,000 annually without benefits, we compute the fully-loaded costs to be \$53,160.

Value Added Expense: \$53,160

Lock Box System

The township began using a lock box system for tax payments in 1996. The lock box system is simply a post office box where taxpayers send their payments. The township contracts for a company to collect the mail, and process the current tax payments for the township.

Previously, the township was having great difficulty meeting the state mandate of depositing funds received within 48 hours during the quarterly collection periods. In addition, the township was spending a significant amount on overtime to keep up with posting the payments received.

The lock box system has alleviated these problems to a large degree. The use of this system has eliminated the need for most of the overtime previously required to process the tax payments, and has saved the township approximately \$100,000 in overtime costs annually.

Taxpayers send payments to a post office box where the mail is picked up and processed. The fee for this service is approximately \$.40 per transaction, which costs the township approximately \$25,000 per year, based on the line items handled. According to state law, only current tax payments may be handled through this system. The contractor must send delinquent payments to the tax collector for processing.

We commend the township for instituting the lock box system and reducing overtime costs associated with the processing of tax payments.

The team's review discovered that this system has both pluses and minuses, however. The staff opinion is that the pluses far outweigh the minuses. Problems include the fact that the Lock Box Company does not note the lot and block numbers on checks it receives. Accordingly, if a bank returns a check, the tax office may need to do quite a bit of research to determine which property is affected. Any payments received at the lock box without a bar code stub are forwarded to the township for processing. This delays the posting of the payment, and at times results in an interest penalty on an account. Any other glitch in a payment causes the lock box company to forward the problem payment to the tax office. This results in additional work for this office.

The system has alleviated the crush of people coming to the office to make payments in person and has reduced the number of payments to be processed by the staff to a number that is more manageable. This has allowed the staff to process the payments that are received in a more timely manner.

In addition, N.J.S.A. 54:4-122.9 and N.J.A.C. 5:33-1.2 govern arrangements of this nature. The law and regulation require the firm receiving the taxes to be a bank or trust company and that the municipality designate the bank or trust company as an official depository. It was not clear to the team that the lock box company was a bank or trust company or had been designated as an official depository.

The team believes these difficulties are solvable, and could be alleviated with some management attention to the contract.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township management assist the tax collector in attempting to resolve these operational problems.

Collection Rate

The collection rate for the past five years has ranged from a low of 92.52% in 1993 to 97.15% in 1997. The 1998 collection rate was 97.13%. The collector feels that there are a number of factors influencing the continued improvement in the collection rate. She mentioned the state's good economy, more lien holders keeping properties current, and the township encouraging homeowners to keep current on their taxes. This last item includes sending out the quarterly delinquent notices and holding the annual tax sale. The staff sends out about 3,100 reminder (delinquent) notices on average each quarter. The annual tax-lien sale has attracted several active

purchasers of liens, resulting in the township selling most tax liens to third parties. The importance of maintaining a high collection rate is discussed under the estimated tax collection section of this report.

We commend the tax collector and her staff for their work in maintaining a high collection rate.

State law permits the township to conduct an accelerated tax sale, where the township sells liens in the same fiscal year the delinquency occurs. The accelerated sale can improve cash flow and increases the budget surplus available for appropriation the following year.

An accelerated sale has serious negative impacts after the following year. First, the extra income from an accelerated sale will be a one-time event in the first year. This is because the income from both the last regular tax sale and the first accelerated sale will not be forthcoming again in the subsequent year.

Secondly, assuming this one-time double sale income is used in the following year's budget, the municipality will need to replace the one-time extra revenue the following year, probably through higher taxes.

Third, before the sale of liens, delinquent taxes earn interest income for the township. The township charges delinquent amounts up to \$1,500 interest at 8%. Delinquent amounts over \$1,500 have interest accruing at 18%. Were the township to sell liens on an accelerated basis, the interest after the sale would accrue to the lien holder. This revenue will be equally hard to replace.

In summary, the team feels that an accelerated tax sale in a municipality with Dover's strong collection rate would not be prudent.

Overpayments

A review of the township audit reports for the last three years indicated that there was a problem with the township's processing and returning of overpayments of taxes to its residents. These overpayments go back to the 1970's and total nearly \$900,000.

Large overpayments typically occur when a taxpayer refinances or pays off a mortgage and both the property owner and mortgage companies make payments. This requires the tax collector to verify which party is due the refund. Overpayments of small amounts occur when a taxpayer who is not paying tax through a mortgage company forgets a payment and gets a delinquent notice. The notice includes an interest calculation to a future date. Often the taxpayer pays the total amount on the notice without contacting the tax office for a precise calculation of interest.

Some may suggest that the failure to return these overpayments has generated a good deal of interest income for the township, and the finance department's interest in resolving this issue is therefore limited. The team believes the historic under-staffing in this office is the primary cause of this backlog. In a properly functioning office the overpayments would be applied or refunded

to the proper owner in a much more timely manner. The tax collector's office is currently attempting to investigate and process the overpayments. Since many of the overpayments are so old, and property transfers and refinancing have occurred in the intervening years, the research is very difficult and requires a great deal of time and research. There is limited time available for the current staff to do such extensive research, as each staff person has specific duties that must be taken care of every day. The collector reports that the tax office staff is researching the overpayments as time allows.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township make sure that future overpayments are processed and returned to the taxpayers as they occur and process the large number of tax overpayments as quickly as possible.

Staffing

The township has been cost conscious when it comes to hiring or replacing staff when positions become vacant. Many times the township leaves positions vacant, or fills them with part-time staff. The tax office has not been exempt from this policy. Generally, these are cost-saving measures that the LGBR program supports. However, the township needs to critically assess the workloads involved in each division and make informed decisions on staff reductions.

The tax collection office handles the largest and most important revenue stream of the township. It may not be in the best interest of the township administration or the taxpayers to under-staff this office. While the lock box system has reduced the number of cashiers needed, it has created duties that were not anticipated. The replacement of full-time staff members with part-time staff members has resulted in a net decrease in the number of staff in this office while the volume of tax accounts increases about 2% each year. Better staffing levels would allow staff to work more cautiously and avoid errors. Several of the staff in this office expressed the concern that the amount of telephone calls that come in, and the amount of work these calls generate, is very significant. The calls routinely divert most employees from the duties the tax collector has assigned. Voice mail, often suggested as an alternative, is not a solution for this office because the volume of phone calls is high and the type of questions are usually very specific. The team feels there would be limited time available for the staff to return calls to those having left messages.

The team feels the staffing issues raised here further justify the need for an additional staff person in the tax office.

Other municipalities have used an automated telephone answering system to handle many routine tax questions taxpayers may have, e.g., taxes paid last year, last quarter, and amounts due at any time. Old Bridge Township in Middlesex County successfully implemented such a system with positive comments from taxpayers, lawyers, and realtors.

Training

It was a universal feeling in the division that the staff could use more computer training. Currently, staff members learn to use the office system by trial and error. The computer software that the township uses is very good, according to the staff, but most of the staff has had very little training on it. The team is aware that the software vendor provides a service where the vendor's staff evaluates how well the client staff is using the software, and recommends training where appropriate. We understand the evaluation service is free. We estimate providing nine staff members with four hours of training will cost approximately \$1,000. This expense will be more than offset by productivity enhancements.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township contact the software vendor to evaluate the staff's strengths and weaknesses on the system, and provide training to increase efficiency.

Value Added Expense: \$1,000

TAX ASSESSING

The tax assessor's office is responsible for establishing the proper value of the 39,962 properties in the municipality to assure the proper apportionment of the property tax.

Staffing and Budget

In addition to the tax assessor, the office has one deputy assessor, a secretary, a clerk typist, three assessing clerks, and one full-time and one part-time field representative, totaling 8.5 employees. The 1998 budget allocated funds for one additional assessing clerk, one additional field representative, and one part-time data clerk. While these positions remained unfilled during 1998, the assessor was requesting approval to fill the positions in the 1999 budget. The 1998 salary and wage (S&W) budget was \$330,000. The S&W expenditures were \$334,281. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$449,472. The other expenses were budgeted at \$45,000 and actual expenditures were \$22,775. Based on the total expenditures in 1998, the cost per-line-item is \$11.82, falling within the national average of \$10 - \$12 per line.

Based on the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) staffing standard, a community with 40,000 line items would typically have 11 or 12 employees. In addition to the IAAO staffing standard, the team reviewed the volume of tax appeals and volume of building permits issued each year and their effect on the staffing, and finds the additional staff to be justified. If the township funded two full-time positions at \$35,000 each, including benefits, and the number of lines increases at 2% per year, the 1999 per-line-cost would be \$13.30.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township fully staff the assessor's office.

Value Added Expense: \$70,000

Training

The assessing staff is well-trained and qualified for its positions. Five staff members are certified tax assessors, having attended formal training classes and successfully passing an exam, in addition to at least four years of work experience in property tax assessment. The assessor has established a formal cross-training program in the office, rotating employees through the various functions in the unit for an extended period. This has resulted in the staff becoming very knowledgeable about all the functions in the office, making absences less troublesome and onerous for the staff and taxpayers. The assessor notes that ongoing training in computer software and assessing issues is a concern.

We commend the assessor for this creative staff training.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township maintain the effectiveness of this staff by supporting an ongoing training program. We estimate that tuition for assessing seminars and relevant computer seminars for various staff members will cost approximately \$1,000 per year.

Value Added Expense: \$1,000

Assessments

Dover Township has 39,962 properties totaling over \$5.4 billion in assessed value for 1998. Due to the growth in the township, the total valuation has grown 1.5% to 2% per year over the past three years.

The township last conducted a revaluation of all the property in the township for the 1994 tax year. A review of the equalization ratio, the coefficients of deviation, the quality of property record maintenance and the quality of the office technology can be used to predict the need for another revaluation by the assessing staff.

In the time since the assessed values were created in 1994, the actual market values have increased resulting in the assessed values in 1998 being, on average, 93% of the market value. This equalization ratio will continue to drop as property values increase generally in the township, unless the assessor continually adjusts assessments to stay current with neighborhood property values. Additionally, as the market for homes varies between neighborhoods, the ratio will become different in each neighborhood over time.

The coefficient of deviation is a statistical measure of uniformity of assessments within the township. A higher coefficient indicates a lower degree of uniformity. The IAAO standard on ratios indicates that the acceptable range is 10-20, with less than 15 being more desirable. In Dover the general coefficient, the measure of variation for all properties, was as follows:

1993: 15.85
 1994: 12.48
 1995: 13.03
 1996: 13.02
 1997: 11.29

The stratified coefficient examines properties within a class. Accordingly, residential properties are compared separately from vacant land and commercial properties.

Coefficients stratified by class:

	Vacant Land	Residential	Commercial
1993	39.20	14.57	25.12
1994	21.01	11.94	11.96
1995	22.28	12.22	10.60
1996	24.06	11.93	15.90
1997	20.54	10.97	5.16

Examination of the coefficient by class indicates that the assessment of the vacant land in Dover is significantly below the market value. The assessor was aware of the need for more attention in this area. Conversely, the reduction in the coefficient in commercial property from 1996 to 1997 reflects considerable effort by the assessor and the staff in bringing uniformity to this class of property.

Since 1994, the property record cards have been properly maintained, reflecting ownership changes and changes to the physical characteristics of the property. The office is fully computerized using a computer service. The service provides a comprehensive property assessment system. The office is on-line with the County Tax Board.

We conclude that the current data in Dover is good and the township will probably not need to update values for several years. If the township does not continually update neighborhood assessments, the township should prepare for the eventuality of needing to update the assessments through a town-wide reassessment or revaluation. Assuming the current level of staff expertise and record quality, Dover could accomplish a continuous reassessment in-house very cost-effectively.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township committee support the assessor's efforts to properly maintain the assessment records, and support preparations for a future reassessment.

Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

The township has two apartment complexes that pay a service fee to the township instead of property taxes, Hopes Crossing, a low-moderate income apartment complex and Highland Plaza, a senior citizen apartment complex. Both complexes are currently paying 7% of their gross revenue to the township in lieu of property tax.

The agreement with Hopes Crossing provides for its fee to be the greater of the 7% of gross revenue or a percentage of the total property tax in future years. An analysis of the fees paid compared to what the municipal government would have received in local purpose property tax, shows the township has greatly benefited from these agreements, because the municipal government retains the entire PILOT fee. Ordinary property taxes are allocated to the board of education, county, and fire districts, as well as the township.

The housing provider does enjoy a reduced payment as compared to what taxes would have been paid without the PILOT program.

Exempt Property

The township has a number of properties that state law has exempted from paying property tax. The team reviewed the exemptions granted to determine if the assessor was properly applying the statutory exemptions.

The team found the exempt property files to be up-to-date and orderly. Two of the exempt properties, block 232, lot 15 - Community Club and block 410.02, lot 34 - Nursery school, were referred to the assessor for further review as it was not clear the exemption should apply to them. If the assessor determines the properties are taxable, the result would be an increase in ratables of \$789,400, and an increase of approximately \$18,500 in the total tax of which \$3,500 would be local purpose tax.

The team notes that 75 residential properties qualify for exemption from tax because a veteran, 100% permanently disabled, occupies the home. Based on the 1997 local purpose tax rate, the township is foregoing \$39,000 in property tax revenue. Under state law, the State of New Jersey reimburses veteran and senior citizen property tax deductions to the municipality. Currently, the law does not provide for a similar reimbursement for the disabled veteran exemptions.

The township has several large statutorily tax-exempt properties. Most notable are the Ocean County College, and the Community Medical Center hospital and nursing home. The statutory tax exemption does not preclude the township from attempting to negotiate a municipal service fee or other in-kind contribution to offset the cost of providing municipal services to the property. Were the properties taxable, the 1997 local purpose tax would have been approximately \$440,000. The team did not determine what services the township is currently providing to these properties or estimate the value of the services.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township review what services the township provides to these facilities, and attempt to negotiate a compensation arrangement.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

There are currently two staff persons in the management information (MIS) office, a director and an assistant director. The director started with the township early 1998. The assistant director has been an employee since 1991. Beginning in 1986, she worked on township matters as a consultant. In 1998, the salary and wages for this division were \$113,518. The other expenses were \$42,885 for a total division expense of \$156,403. The fully-loaded wage cost was \$155,643.

This office operates as a division of the finance office, although its mission is township-wide. MIS is responsible for the computer systems of the township and has recently been put in charge of the telephone system as well. It is involved with hardware, software, programming, staff training, and purchasing. The staff said other departments frequently call for help with other office equipment, such as fax machines and copiers, when there is a problem. Currently, the data processing staff puts out fires as they happen.

Experts in the computer industry generally use a benchmark of approximately 50 personal computers and printers to each MIS staff member, exclusive of the director. Using this benchmark, we find that, while the staff is operating with more computers than would be desirable according to the ideal ratio, it is apparent from our interviews that staff training is suffering. With the anticipated installation of the wide area network, we believe the township will need additional staff support. It is important that the township committee recognize that even the best and most updated technology is useless unless the employees are trained and sufficient support staff is available. The township may wish to explore the use of contractors to provide some of the maintenance or training support. The township needs to invest in its "people-ware" as well as investing in hardware and software. We estimate the fully-loaded cost for an entry level staff person to be \$50,000.

The previous director of data processing had an informal technology plan for the township and had some money put in the capital budget. The current MIS director reported that no formal plan exists.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township reassign the office of management information systems to the office of the administrator, recognizing its township-wide mission.

We recommend the administrator and MIS director create a three-year technology plan for the township and a schedule for implementation.

We recommend the township committee open a dialog with the Toms River Regional School Board to explore the possibility of a combined MIS department and staff. The school board has very impressive computer support and training capabilities and the township may benefit from such an alliance. Similar training is available to local governments through the State of NJ Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI). HRDI offers many courses for common software applications at approximately \$65 per person.

We recommend the township committee contract for or employ experienced support staff to service the expanded computer system.

Value Added Expense: \$50,000

Web Page

The MIS staff is responsible for maintaining the township web page, but report they have been directed to spend minimal time doing it. The team observed on several occasions that the information on the web page, such as recreation programs, is often several weeks out-of-date. The township has one e-mail connection at this time in the MIS office. This requires the office to take the message, give it to the appropriate person and then, if required, assist that person in responding to the sender. Reportedly, the township committee and administration have been opposed to wider access to the Internet. There is one connection in purchasing and one for the CDBG staff.

The township may wish to expand the use of the Internet for such things as on-line registration for recreation, golf tee times, and publication of public documents such as board and committee agendas. The appropriate use of this technology could help the township provide greater convenience to the residents and avoid costs associated with in-person handling.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township explore the possibility of establishing internships with the local schools and the county college for computer students, and have these interns help maintain the web page, e-mail accounts, and troubleshoot computer problems.

Staff Training

The training available to the MIS staff appears limited. The team was told that MIS staff have been denied permission to attend PC expositions and/or conferences on township time, even when the employees were willing to pay their own admission. These forums would help to keep staff current on technology issues facing local governments. We estimate that a staff person or two should be able to acquire significant training for \$1,000 per year.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township provide a training budget to the data processing office to provide the staff with opportunities to update its knowledge.

Value Added Expense: \$1,000

Tax Sale Program

The MIS staff created a software program to facilitate the township tax sale for 1997. It was very successful, and both the tax office staff and individuals participating in the tax sale were pleased with how well it worked.

We commend the MIS and tax office staff for this cooperative effort to improve the efficiency of the tax sale.

PURCHASING

The team observed a purchasing department that is diligent and well-organized. The program was functioning at a model level. The individual functioning as the purchasing agent is a registered public purchasing official, having completed the purchasing official courses. She has become a resource person for other municipalities with complex purchasing issues. The purchasing office is a two-person office. It went on-line with the software acquired by the township in 1996. The new computer system has been well-received by all departments. This system allows every department head the capability of making requisitions electronically through the purchasing department, receiving approvals, and then issuing the purchase order from ones own department. Each department then sends out the purchase orders to the vendor. The individual departments are then able to track the progress of the document.

All of the requisitions must first contain bid specs and quotes before the purchasing agent can approve them at the first level. Purchase orders in Dover appear to require an unusual number of approvals. The township's system requires the department head to approve the requisition. Once approved, the purchasing office verifies that any needed quotes have been obtained, and verifies with the finance office that funds are available from the appropriate line item. Then additional approval of the finance office by the CFO is required. As the team reviewed the system, we found this last step appeared redundant and at times caused delays in obtaining needed supplies, because this final approval had not been obtained. The delays appear to be simply because of the press of other business, as the volume of purchase orders that the CFO ultimately does not approve is very small.

In 1997, the purchasing department was responsible for processing 4,916 purchase orders that amounted to \$126,515,183 for operating, capital, golf utility and non-budgeted funds.

We commend the township for a well-run purchasing office.

Recommendation:

We recommend the administrator review the purchase order system with an eye toward streamlining the administrative approvals.

The NJ State Distribution Center is a division of the Treasury Department that purchases bulk supplies for the various departments of the State of New Jersey. The center is available for use

by municipalities, and offers competitive prices. The center also satisfies the requirement for bidding for supplies purchased through the center. Dover Township does not currently have an account with the State Distribution Center.

Recommendation:

The team recommends that the township open an account with the New Jersey State Distribution Center and include the center on its interest list when quoting for supplies.

PERSONNEL

Dover Township operates its own personnel system governing hiring, firing, promotions, and discipline. It is not a "civil service" community, governed by the rules of the NJ Department of Personnel.

The team was told in several interviews that while political connections had always had some impact on staff hiring decisions, it has become more so in the past few years. Several staff members recounted their political credentials when asked how they got their job.

The effect, predictably, is supervisors are reluctant to make day-to-day operational and disciplinary decisions for fear of second-guessing and end-runs by subordinates to superiors.

Micromanaging from both senior staff and elected officials was also apparent. Several of those interviewed related incidents where directions (sometimes contrary to the staff's judgement) were telephoned in. An example was an elected official giving direction to the public works staff regarding snow removal. This not only suggests that elected and senior staff officials do not trust the judgement of those they have appointed, but also suggests the absence of a thoughtful approach to managing predictable events.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

The township has adopted a policy requiring drug testing for employees required to have a commercial drivers license (CDL). The US Department of Transportation mandated this testing in 1996. These requirements include random testing of those with a CDL. The township has employees selected for random testing by a contractor selected through the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF). When notified of a random test, the selected employees report to Community Medical Center for the testing. Supervisors in the public works department stated that the testing notification could be a disruption to the work schedule. Drivers already out with a crew must be taken off route for the testing and driven by a supervisor to the hospital.

The team is familiar with testing routines in other municipalities where random testing is conducted at the end or beginning of a shift to avoid disruption.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township review the protocol for random testing with its contractor and the public works director and revise the notification and reporting process to minimize the disruption to the workday.

In September, 1998, the NJ Attorney General issued revisions to the policy for drug testing those employed in law enforcement positions. Previously, the policy did not include random testing. The new revision permits municipalities to include random testing of police officers.

We believe that the current positive reputation of the Dover Police will be enhanced by the inclusion of a random sample protocol in the township policy. Costs for testing for both drugs and alcohol are \$50 per sample. Assuming the township randomly tests a 50% sample of the 135 sworn officers each year, the cost will be \$3,400 annually.

Recommendation

We recommend the township revise its drug and alcohol testing policy to include law enforcement staff in random testing.

Value Added Expense: \$3,400

Personnel Office

The personnel office currently has two employees, a director and a clerk/typist. This office falls under the direction of the township administrator. The current personnel officer has been with the township since 1996. Before coming to the township, the director was employed in the private sector. He is new to the human resources field. The clerk/typist has been with the township since early 1998, having come from a clerical position in the private sector. In 1998, salary and wages totaled \$63,689. The other expenses were \$3,409, for a total expenditure in 1998 of \$67,098. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$84,911.

There are 500 employees in the township. Approximately 70 are part-time. These figures do not include the approximately 125 seasonal employees hired each summer. Other than taking in the initial applications, the personnel office is not involved in the hiring of seasonal help. Part-time and seasonal employees are not eligible for the township benefit package.

The police department and the department of public works are the township's largest departments, with approximately 250 employees between them. These offices are in remote locations from town hall.

The township eliminated the personnel officer's position in 1991. Those interviewed reported it was a cost-savings measure. From 1991 to 1997, the CFO handled most of the township's personnel issues on a part-time basis. A few other duties, such as workers' compensation, were spread out among other departments.

The team received comments in a number of interviews that, during this time, personnel issues were not handled in a timely fashion. Due to the size of Dover's workforce, and the complexity of personnel issues, the team concurs with the decision by the township to rehire a full-time personnel director. We believe that this office needs additional management support, and that it should be restructured somewhat. The formulation of a mission statement for this division, as well as tangible goals and objectives, would assist in giving this office more direction.

Labor relations with the various employee groups has been somewhat strained. It appears that the strain is mostly due to the adversarial tone set by some members of management. We believe the township may have an opportunity to retrieve deteriorating labor relations by expanding the use of the personnel office.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the administrator and personnel director formulate a mission statement to articulate the goals, objectives, and areas of responsibility and control for the personnel office.

Currently, the personnel office handles a number of routine, but extremely time-consuming, tasks. The staff prepares department organizational charts, records general employee information for new hires, tracks health benefit claims and premium payments for employees and retirees, processes pension enrollments and changes, hires temporary employees, and screens applicants for most township positions.

The personnel office at this time does not handle safety issues, workers' compensation, training programs for employees, labor relations or labor negotiations. It also does not regularly conduct general orientation for new hires, or update general employee information for existing employees. These functions either are handled by other departments, or are not done.

Except for police, each department tracks all leave time manually and provides the information to the personnel office. The personnel staff then enters it into a computer. The police department tracks its members' leave time internally.

The personnel files do not track an individual's entitlement for vacation, personal days, sick leave, etc. The personnel staff knows what dates an employee has taken off, but does not keep a running account of time accrued vs. time taken.

The township is currently creating a computer network that will tie the personnel office into other departments. The data entry done in personnel will become even more critical once the various departments are on the network. Having the leave time for all departments on a network will allow appropriate personnel to enter data when necessary and be able to look up data, such as police leave time taken, when questions arise.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the individual departments handle many routine data entry tasks, for review by the personnel office, once the computer network is established.

We recommend that the personnel office work with the MIS department to review commercially available software to record and maintain employee information. Such a program may be more useful than the homemade spreadsheet currently in use.

The maintenance of training records for employees is an area of concern. Those interviewed told the team no one was keeping track of what training the various departments had conducted. Similarly, no one tracked the need for refresher training. Record-keeping for general safety training, confined space entry, lock out/tag out, sexual harassment, and even health benefits issues will serve to protect the municipality from a variety of claims. Tracking training requirements and scheduling on a network should make keeping this up-to-date less time-consuming. Those interviewed expressed concern that once created, the staff will not be available to maintain the information. In addition, some expressed doubt that the staff will be trained to use the network effectively. The lack of computer training was mentioned as a shortcoming in most departments, and is more fully discussed under the MIS section of this report.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the administrator and personnel director review the training records of each department to verify what records the departments are keeping, and what records need to be kept by the personnel department.

The personnel office appears inefficient when handling many of its tasks. At times, we learned this is a result of directives. For example, the township advertised for an entry-level laborer position in the department of public works. Over 100 applicants responded. The administrator directed the personnel director to interview all the individuals that had applied for the position. The director was not given the authority to rank the applications according to qualifications, previous experience, etc., thereby allowing him to interview a limited number of applicants. The director stated he did not know why he was given this task. The administrator reported that this exercise would assist the township in both establishing an employment list for future openings and assist in recruiting minority employees. While worthy goals, both establishing an employment list and identifying potential minority employees can be accomplished in ways that are far more efficient.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township create a policy to be followed when hiring new employees that is fair, effective and cost-efficient.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS

Work-related injuries are reported to the safety coordinator or his secretary who have full-time responsibilities in the engineering department. Both of these employees have been assigned multiple other titles and jobs in the engineering department. When the team inquired as to the rationale for having this function in engineering, we were told it was assigned there when the personnel office was eliminated a number of years ago as a part of the reassignment of functions. These former functions of the personnel office have not been returned to the re-established personnel office. The township has a safety committee, yet the personnel officer is not a member of the safety committee.

We noted that the files for workers' compensation claims, which are confidential, are stored in cardboard boxes on the floor of the engineering department. Nothing prevents access to these files by unauthorized personnel.

The personnel office handles the temporary replacement of employees out on injury and it gets a report from the safety committee secretary once a week. The personnel officer only becomes more involved in workers' compensation if it becomes a contested matter. In practice, the personnel director reports that by the time he becomes involved, the problem has usually escalated to the point where it is in the hands of the labor attorney.

The team has observed the value of having the personnel officer of a municipality fully involved in workers' compensation claims from the start. Having a well-informed and coordinated response to claims can serve to reduce the volume of contested claims, and identify needed safety training or other corrective action.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the workers' compensation function be removed from engineering and placed under the direction of the personnel office.

We recommend that the position of safety officer be reassigned to a senior staff person in each department. That person should report to the personnel officer in matters concerning safety. The current stipend paid to the safety officer should be discontinued, and reallocated for training and other expenses related to safety.

We recommend the secretary assigned to workers' compensation and safety be reassigned from engineering to the personnel office. In addition to the workers' compensation/safety responsibilities, the secretary would also be available to assist with the data entry and other duties previously discussed. We believe the clerical duties in the engineering department can be handled by the reduced staff, providing the recommendations in the engineering section of the report are implemented.

We also recommend all files associated with workers' compensation claims be relocated to the personnel office and securely handled.

The basic equipment needs of an office that handles confidential files are not being met. Both the personnel officer and the secretary spend a great deal of their time going to other offices to fax, receive faxes and copy documents. Due to the sensitive and confidential nature of much of its work, many tasks must be handled directly by the personnel staff. A fax machine physically located in the personnel office would allow the staff to continue working on other tasks while receiving confidential and sensitive information.

Recommendation:

We recommend the personnel office be provided with a fax machine. Typical fax machines cost \$700. Should an additional telephone line need to be installed, we understand installation costs \$150, and the service fee is approximately \$250 per year.

Initial Value Added Expense: \$850

Recurring Annual Expense: \$250

LABOR CONTRACTS

The team reviewed the six labor contracts in the township. Contracts exist for police, police supervisors, the DPW staff, the clerical staff, and the supervisory staff. The contracts that exist in the fire districts are discussed in the fire services section of this report.

The following is a description of the provisions of these contracts with accompanying comments and recommendations for change which may, in many cases, require negotiation of contract provisions. Cost savings computed are only potential savings, as the need to negotiate the provisions of the contracts makes projecting savings speculative.

Sick Leave

Most of the township contracts provide for 15 sick days per year, except crossing guards, who, as part-time employees, do not receive sick leave.

The supervisor contracts provide that if supervisory employees have reported to work, and then leave due to illness they are only charged for one-half a sick day, even if they have only been in the office for ten minutes. Although there are contractual references to abuse of sick leave possibly resulting in disciplinary action, a definition of abuse was not provided in the contracts or in the personnel rules.

Recommendations:

We recommend employees be charged for the actual sick leave time used. The township committee may wish to ask the township attorney to review the Fair Labor Standards Act regarding this recommendation as it applies to managerial employees.

We recommend the township establish a definition for sick leave abuse.

We recommend that the township require a doctor's note for employees absent for three or more days in a row. Additionally, a supervisor should have the ability, with advance notice, to require a doctor's note for each day.

Terminal Leave/Sick Leave Buy Back

There is a variety of sick leave buy back policies in the different contracts. They include a 130-day buy back of sick leave, a maximum of six months buy back with payout in a lump sum, and full sick leave buy back with no maximum.

Employees can opt to take the time as time off, being treated as active employees getting benefits, rather than getting a lump sum monetary payment for the time. We compute that six months of family coverage costs \$3,690 per employee.

Seven employees retired in the past two years. The township personnel office was not able to report the amount of money paid as sick leave buy back or terminal leave in the past two years. Accordingly, the team was not able to estimate an average sick leave buy back amount. Assuming each took 120 days off rather than a lump sum, the township paid an additional \$25,830, plus the cost of additional vacation time and other benefits.

Recommendations:

We recommend that in future contracts the state's maximum dollar amount of \$15,000 be established for sick leave buy back upon retirement.

We recommend that the practice of allowing employees to take the time off while remaining active and receiving benefits be discontinued.

Potential Cost Savings: \$25,830

Holidays

The contracts provide for 14 holidays each year. In addition, employees receive their birthdays off if they had no preventable work-related accidents or injuries the previous year.

Bereavement Leave

The bereavement leave provisions provide time off for an employee to attend a funeral and to family business upon the death of certain relatives. The relatives whose deaths trigger the leave are consistent in the contracts, and extend from immediate family to parents and grandparents of the employee and spouse.

The number of days allowed are different in the contracts. The most common is three days, with five days given if the death is out of state. The police contracts grant leave from the date of death to burial with an additional five days if the death is out of state.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township renegotiate the police bereavement policy to be more consistent with the provisions of the other contracts.

Vacation Leave

Before the most recent labor contracts, the township vacation schedule was uniform. Recent labor contracts have reduced the vacation schedule for new hires allowing five days for the first five years, ten days for the sixth through 15th year of service, and a maximum of 20 days after 15 years of service.

We commend the township for reducing the vacation allotment and the cost savings associated with it.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township review the vacation schedule for all full-time non-contractual employees, and reduce the maximum allowance to 20 workdays per year. This equates to one month of work. Additionally, future contract negotiations should cap the vacation benefit for anyone not having reached 20 days vacation per year to 20 days per year. We have not computed cost savings because of the uncertainty of negotiations. We note that reducing the maximum vacation allowance by five days per year will save \$625 per employee per year for each employee earning \$30,000 per year.

Personal Leave

All bargaining units receive three personal days per year. Some contracts specify that these days do not accumulate from year to year. Other contracts are silent on this point, but the non-accumulation interpretation appears to be understood by those interviewed.

Recommendation:

We recommend the contract language be clarified at the time of the next negotiations.

Work Week

The majority of the bargaining units work a 40-hour workweek. There are some deviations with white collar and supervisor union employees working 35, 37.5 or 40 hours.

Recall/Standby

There are various recall and standby provisions. Police receive \$10 per shift to be on standby. The public works, police, and clerical employees receive a minimum of 1.5 times their rate of pay for the time worked on recall. The police and public works contracts have a minimum of four hours guaranteed. The clerical employees have a minimum of three. The contracts are silent on whether the work assigned during the four-hour call-out period must be restricted to the purpose for the recall.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the contract language be clarified to allow the township to assign work unrelated to the call-out for the duration of the minimum period.

Uniforms

The uniform policies vary between the bargaining units. Crossing guards are provided with one uniform per year with replacement as needed. Police receive \$1,000 per year, with plainclothes officers receiving an additional \$12.50 per month. Annually, the police uniform expenditures are approximately \$138,150. Public works and clerical employees have uniforms provided if needed, with some clerical employees receiving an unspecified cleaning allowance.

The NJ State Police use the “quartermaster” system where items of uniform are replaced when worn out. Currently, the cost-per-trooper is \$300 per year. Were the township to use the quartermaster system, for police alone we compute a savings of \$97,650.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township negotiate and adopt where appropriate the “quartermaster” system for all employees, similar to that used by the state police. Additionally, we recommend the contract provisions concerning cleaning be clarified.

Potential Cost Savings: \$97,650

Educational Incentive

Only the police contracts include an educational incentive. For those members who were hired prior to 1978 the township pays a lump sum \$250 annually for those holding an associate's degree, and \$500 for those holding a baccalaureate degree. Those employed for at least 7.5 years with a minimum of 10 job-related college credits, receive a one-time lump sum payment of \$500. Those employees who have been employed for 15 years and have 15 job-related college credits receive a one-time lump sum payment of \$1,000. According to the chief of police, the township now has minimum requirements for new officers that include having completed an associate's degree.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township negotiate to remove the existing educational incentive provisions.

Health Benefits

Before 1998, there had not been premium co-payments by employees for their health insurance. The recently ratified public works contract provides that employees will contribute \$7.50 per pay period towards their health insurance. The police contract provides for a \$450 annual premium co-pay.

We commend the township for instituting this premium co-payment provision in the public works and police contracts and recommend that the township work to include such a provision in all township labor agreements.

Recommendation:

We recommend that similar provisions be required of non-contractual employees.

Prescription Plan

The previous labor agreements for public works, clerical, and supervisors had a point-of-service co-payment of \$3.50 for generic and \$5.00 for brand name drugs. The new public works contract provides that the co-payment required will be reduced to \$1.00 for all prescriptions. The police contract includes co-payments of \$3.50 and \$5.00 as long as the township does not switch insurance carriers. In the case of a change in insurance carriers, the co-payment will be changed to \$3.50 for all prescriptions. The team has seen prescription co-pays increasing to \$7.00 and \$10.00. Reportedly, this concession facilitated getting the medical co-pay.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township attempt to negotiate higher prescription point of service co-pays.

Longevity

Each of the township's labor agreements, except crossing guards, provides for either lump sum or percentages for longevity payments. The public works agreement has eliminated longevity for employees hired after January 1, 1998. All other agreements include percentages with police longevity beginning after three years of service and the other contracts after five years of service.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township continue to eliminate the provision of longevity in the remaining labor agreements. As possible interim measures, we recommend payment in the form of a flat dollar amount, instead of a percentage. Also, we recommend eligibility be pushed back to 10 years of employment instead of the current three-and five-year time frames.

Retirement Health Benefits

The public works, clerical, and supervisors labor agreements provide that, upon retirement, after 25 years of continuous service with the township, full paid health benefits will be provided for the employee. Currently, public works employees who retire after 20 years may remain in the health plan, but must pay their own premiums.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township negotiate for future retiree benefits to change in accordance with those of active employees.

INSURANCE

The township is insured for property, general liability, auto liability, workers' compensation, environmental impairment, public officials' liability, and employment practices liability through the Ocean County Joint Insurance Fund (Ocean County JIF) and the Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund (MEL). The Ocean County JIF is in turn a member of the Environmental JIF, which provides insurance in the specialized area of environmental impairment. The MEL provides excess liability over the Ocean County JIF coverage for \$5 million. Up to an additional \$5 million excess liability coverage is available to the township for an additional premium. Dover has elected not to take additional excess coverage.

As a condition of participation in the JIFs, the township is required to appoint a commissioner to the JIFs' governing body. N.J.S.A. 40A:10-37 requires a JIF commissioner to be a member of the municipal governing body or an employee of the municipality. The township committee has appointed an individual as the commissioner. The individual's name does not appear on the township payroll and is not a member of the township committee.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township committee comply with N.J.S.A. 40A:10-37.

The team understands that the current commissioner's term has been very short. The township committee appointed the commissioner in the spring of 1998 to fill the unexpired term of the previous commissioner.

The Ocean County JIF has appointed Commerce National as its risk manager. The JIF and the MEL contract with the risk manager to conduct safety meetings and seminars for member municipalities. They are also available to consult with any of the member towns. The JIF compensates the risk manager at 6% of the premium charged by the JIF. The portion of the risk manager's compensation attributed to Dover Township is approximately \$100,000. We believe the functions of a risk management consultant will vary widely from town to town, and the services provided may not have any relationship to the premium paid by the town. We feel the township, rather than the JIF, should select the risk manager and determine the value of the risk management contract based on the services required.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township, not the JIF, appoint its own risk manager on an as-needed basis to evaluate the insurance needed by the township and review the operation of the JIF and coverage provided by the JIF.

The JIF also requires the township to designate a safety coordinator. Dover has designated the supervisor of building and grounds/emergency management coordinator/code enforcement officer as the township safety coordinator. The team understands that due to various other work responsibilities, the safety coordinator responsibilities receive limited attention.

The Ocean County JIF also employs the Dover CFO as the JIF treasurer. The JIF paid the treasurer \$25,000 in 1998 in addition to his township salary. The treasurer attends each meeting, and is required to prepare deposits and reconcile disbursements for the JIF. Ocean County JIF meetings are held monthly, beginning at 4:00 p.m. at the Dover Town Hall.

The team has had experience with JIFs of various sizes in the state, and has found that JIF treasurer work typically takes about five hours per month in addition to the formal meeting time. Assuming the monthly meetings take two hours each, it appears the JIF treasurer is being compensated at about \$297 per hour.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township committee require the JIF commissioner to review all professional fees paid by the JIF, to ensure that the JIF is paying competitive rates.

The township copies of the JIF documents were not readily available at town hall, and no one had a clear idea of who should have them. The team's experience with the various reports produced each month by the JIFs in the state is that the insurance, risk, and loss information is quite valuable in the management of the business of the township. Accordingly, we were disappointed that the various department heads were not familiar with the reports and did not know who would have the information.

The team reviewed the township loss runs from the claim-handling firm and the Ocean County JIF meeting reports. Lost time frequency is a statistical measure of both the frequency and severity (in terms of lost workdays) of workplace accidents. The three-year average lost time frequency through March, 1998 was 6.60, meaning that for every 200 staff hours worked, 6.60 hours were lost to work related injuries. The team considered this number good. The township received an award from the JIF for greatest reduction in lost time injuries several years ago.

The township has a safety committee consisting of the township administrator and department heads. The safety committee had no representation from the various labor groups in the township. We noted the public works labor contract includes a provision to include

representation on a safety committee. The U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration notes that safety programs are generally more successful when a sincere effort is made to include the members of the workforce in safety committees.

While the lost time injuries are unremarkable in Dover, a review of the year-end accident and injury totals for 1995-1997 showed a 4.5% increase in accidents from 1995-1996, and an 11.5% increase from 1996-1997. Of the accidents reported, the township classified 25% of those in 1995, 23% in 1996, and 30% in 1997 as preventable.

The safety coordinator reported that the department heads are responsible for safety issues within their departments and for staff discipline in case of carelessness and/or preventable accidents. The safety officer was not aware of any action being taken by department heads to reduce injuries or address safety issues. The safety coordinator has assigned his secretary to attend JIF meetings on his behalf.

We commend the township and Ocean County JIF for the efforts in improving safety.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township include workforce members on the safety committee.

Health Benefits

The township acts as the lead agency in obtaining health benefits insurance contracts for itself as well as Fire District 1 and the Parking Authority. Fire District 2 purchases its health policy from a commercial carrier.

The township plan provides a traditional insurance plan (Blue Cross/Blue Shield/Rider J) and an HMO plan for its employees and their dependents.

The rates paid by the township are favorable in comparison to the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP) rates. This is due, in part, to the lower cost of health care in Ocean County relative to the rest of the state. It may also reflect lower claims experience due to a generally healthy employee/dependent population.

Dover's personnel manual defines part-time employment as less than 20 hours per week. Part-time employees are not eligible for health benefits. The township may wish to revise its definition of part-time as less than 30 hours per week to facilitate the use of part-time employees without the cost of health benefits.

Dover Township does not offer an optional plan available through its insurance carrier, commonly known as a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). A PPO is an insurance plan design that offers coverage features of both the traditional plan and HMO plans at rates less than the traditional and HMO rates. Were the township to offer the PPO as an option, experience in other municipalities suggests that many employees would select the PPO rather than the HMO or

traditional plan, saving the township money. Were the township to negotiate the PPO as the basic plan rather than the traditional plan, we calculate that the township's health benefit costs would be reduced by approximately 7%, or \$180,150.

The various non-police labor contracts provide that retirees with 25 or more years of service were eligible for health benefits at township expense. In the case of police benefits, state law provides that the state provides retiree coverage with a 20% premium co-pay where there is no local contract for retiree benefits.

The team reviewed a sample of those retirees receiving township-paid health benefits, and found that those receiving coverage were eligible for the coverage. The personnel staff appeared to account for retirees and COBRA eligible persons who elected to purchase coverage from the township.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township offer the Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) as a coverage option for employees, and establish it as the basic plan for purposes of computing premium co-pays.

Cost Savings: \$180,150

ENGINEERING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Engineering and Community Development is comprised of 12 divisions. The divisions include: environmental planning, permits and inspections, conservation, planning board, board of adjustment, engineering, housing and property maintenance, emergency management, code enforcement, buildings and grounds, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, and the Housing for People With Aids (HOPWA) Program. There is a complex array of funding supporting this department and the various divisions, including user fees, CDBG funds, and the township budget. The report discusses each division individually.

General

In light of organizational changes made in the township in the last few years, the township needs to review the general organization of this department. This department contains very diverse functions. The team believes it could better serve the township if it had a narrower mission and unrelated divisions were located in departments with a similar mission.

"Divisions" have been created that include one professional and a part-time secretary. This suggests consolidation of some of the divisions may be in order.

In summary, we feel reassigning functions currently in the engineering department will make better organizational sense and more closely approximate the arrangement contemplated by the

township code. We feel the emergency management function should be placed in the police department; the workers' compensation/safety functions should be placed in the personnel office; and the building and grounds functions should be placed in the public works department.

The township should also consider making the division of permits and inspections (UCC) a separate department, including code enforcement, zoning enforcement and zoning board.

The divisions of environmental engineering and conservation should be combined in the division of environmental planning, which is specified as a division in the township code. The affordable housing function should be moved to the planning function of this department, not under the code/inspections function.

The divisions for CDBG and HOPWA should be consolidated, and the appropriate titles given to the staff people actually working in these areas.

Currently, the planning function, other than planning board, is included within the engineering division.

Recommendation:

We recommend this department be reorganized to follow the township code where noted and that the township code be revised as appropriate.

Staff

The morale in this department was low. Here, as with some other departments in the township, we recommend some team-building training to increase the department's awareness that all staff needs to work together toward a common goal. Some individuals felt there was favoritism and intimidation within the department, and that the management staff did not appreciate the work they did.

There is a tendency in this department, as there is in the township, to give multiple titles and the associated stipends, to specific individuals. This is not always the most efficient way to operate. In the following discussions of the various divisions in the department of engineering and community development, instances of individuals holding multiple titles will be identified, along with proposed revisions where appropriate.

Dictation

The clerical staff spent an inordinate amount of time transcribing dictation. This took away from the time available to assist customers, and delayed answering telephone calls. The professional staff frequently answered telephones since the clerical staff was busy transcribing.

Much of what the clerical staff was transcribing were telephone messages, memos to the file and the like. In today's office environment, these things can be handled more efficiently by the use of

common computer network tools. We estimate the time spent on transcribing dictation during our fieldwork to be well over 60% of the clerical time. We believe that this could be reduced to 30%.

Recommendations:

We recommend the department require all staff members to use word processing software to prepare their own correspondence.

We recommend the department use forms to record telephone messages or brief comments to be included in files to reduce the amount of dictation to be transcribed and to expedite the inclusion of this information in the files.

Productivity Enhancement: \$43,680

We recommend the professionals in the department that do not yet have computers be provided with computers and that they be appropriately trained in their use.

One-time Value Added Expense: \$10,000

Zoning Board of Adjustment

The township has a zoning officer, assistant zoning officer and a full-time secretary on staff for the board of adjustment duties. The zoning officer handles inquiries from the public relating to the zoning ordinance and reviews applications made to the board of adjustment and the planning board. The zoning officer also is the assistant planner for the planning board, and attends all of the planning board meetings. The planning board is discussed more fully in that section of this report.

The assistant zoning officer is also the office manager for the building department and the affordable housing coordinator for the township. The assistant zoning officer, not the zoning officer, attends the monthly meetings of the zoning board.

While all of the zoning board staff is in this department, the assistant zoning officer is located in the building division in a different part of the building. Except for the zoning board secretary and zoning officer, the zoning budget is included within the building division budget. The zoning officer is budgeted under the planning board. In 1998, salary and wages for the zoning board secretary totaled \$36,230. The other expenses were \$84,800. Benefits added \$16,524 to the wage costs.

The zoning board does not “use” the township staff available to it to obtain professional opinions on design, layout, landscaping, planning issues, etc. The staff does not make recommendations to the board. Based on current staffing and workload, they would not have time available to do this. The team was told the board was not interested in any recommendations the staff attempted to make in the past. The current zoning board attorney is attempting to provide

informational/educational seminars to the board members to explain and delineate their duties and responsibilities. Some believe that through additional education there will be a more meaningful decision-making process.

We commend the board of adjustment attorney for instituting an educational program for the board members.

The zoning board's unwillingness to use the township staff for its expertise was evident at a zoning board meeting attended by a member of the review team. One of the applicants was required to attend a "pre" meeting to discuss changes in the colors of the building and the variety of tree to be planted on the site. The board had the applicant change the species of tree from dogwoods to some other tree due to the "disease" problems with dogwoods. If the board had had the township staff, or another knowledgeable professional, review the landscape plan, they would have been informed that the problem exists only with the native dogwood and not with other dogwood varieties.

Requiring the applicant to attend a meeting to change the landscape plan could have been avoided, and instead taken care of through a letter from the staff saving time and expense. These are issues that the township staff could easily have resolved without requiring the applicant to have his attorney and engineer attend a meeting. The insistence of the board to handle minor matters is costing the taxpayers and applicants unnecessary money and time.

In another instance, the board disregarded a staff concern that they request/require an applicant/developer to install impact-resistant glass or netting in town homes adjacent to the township's golf course.

Recommendation:

We recommend the board of adjustment use the knowledge and expertise available to it, in the department of engineering and community development staff, when reviewing applications before it.

The township has separate professional service contracts to provide engineering, legal and court reporting services for both the zoning and planning boards. The township committee has not solicited proposals for these services; instead these are appointments made on a yearly basis. As these are professional services, it is not required that they solicit proposals. However, in order to ensure that the township is receiving competitive rates from the firms involved, the township committee should issue a request for proposals to area firms. While the engineering service costs appear to have remained stable in the last two to three years, the legal service fees have increased by \$10,000 a year for the last three years without any apparent change in the professional services specified. Competitive proposals would help to determine if these escalating fees were warranted.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township issue requests for proposals for the legal and court reporter services to obtain competitive prices for these services.

We recommend that the township discontinue the practice of hiring an outside engineering firm for the board of adjustment. The township code specifies the township engineer should be the engineer to the zoning board.

Cost Savings: \$20,000

The team attempted to analyze the amount of revenue generated by zoning and planning board application fees to determine if it would benefit the township to institute the collection of development review escrow fees as is allowed by law. The team repeatedly requested information from the township on the revenue generated from planning and zoning board applications for 1996, 1997, and 1998. The information provided was incomplete. The team feels the actual amounts are greater than the figures reported.

It appears that the zoning board generates approximately \$60,000 to \$100,000 annually in application fees. In 1997, the only year made available to the team, the planning board appeared to generate over \$330,000 in application fees. Based on the limited information provided, we estimate the township income from these two boards is approximately \$450,000 - \$500,000.

Dover uses the application fee to compensate itself for the expense of reviewing plans, rather than use the escrow account system contemplated by the Land Use Law. Accordingly, for any individual application, the cost of the review is not directly related to the application fee. Accordingly, the fees for all applications are increased to cover the cost of all reviews. This system causes uncomplicated applications to subsidize the review of complicated applications. Based on the expenses of the offices and the income from the applications, it appears that the township may generate approximately \$150,000 - \$200,000 in net income from application fees.

While generating non-tax income is commendable, the team feels that the township should consider instituting an escrow account system for plan review costs. This system properly allocates the review costs to those applications requiring reviews that are more involved. The township should reduce the application fees accordingly. We feel a developers' escrow account would be more in keeping with the statutory requirement in N.J.S.A. 40:55D-8b that application fees be reasonable. We also note the general intent of N.J.S.A. 55D-53.1 is that the township deposit plan review funds into an escrow account and pay the township or its consultants for review costs from that escrow. This law contemplates the use of municipal employees for plan reviews and provides for the reimbursement of overhead expenses by allowing 200% of the direct salary expense to be charged to the escrow.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township review the present fee structure and the requirements of municipal land use law with its attorney.

The zoning officer and assistant zoning officer are located in two separate offices, engineering and building. Applicants may end up going to either or both offices for zoning matters.

The zoning officer receives calls throughout the day regarding nuisance situations. He had stacks of complaint forms from 1995-1997 in a desk drawer, apparently addressed, but uncounted and obviously not filed. Annual reports are not prepared regarding zoning matters or number of permits issued. The team was told this was because there is not sufficient staff to do so. Additionally, due to the staff workload, enforcement action associated with complaints received is rare. The building department handles small zoning complaints when the staff relates the complaint to a permit issue. The property maintenance staff may handle other small complaints. Cases that are more serious will get the zoning officer involved. Based on discussions held with the zoning staff, regarding allocation of time related to zoning matters, there is less than one half of a full-time equivalent position dedicated to technical zoning matters.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the township reorganize the zoning staff so that sufficient time and staff are available to perform the duties associated with the jobs.

We recommend the position of zoning officer be made a full-time position, and be physically located in the building/code office.

Value Added Expense: \$30,000 - \$35,000

Planning Board

There is a full-time secretary for the planning board on staff in the engineering department. In addition to her planning board duties, she also assists the other clerical staff with transcribing dictation, answering telephones, and assisting with inquiries at the counter. The assistant planner also serves as the zoning officer. In 1998, salary and wage expenses totaled \$83,053. Other expenses totaled \$109,721.

The planning board has individual professional service contracts for engineering, legal and court reporter services. The township engineer, under a professional service contract with the township, acts as the engineer for the planning board. The township does not issue a request for proposals for these services. As was mentioned under the section on zoning board, according to the township code, the township engineer is supposed to act as the engineer for both the zoning and planning boards as part of his duties as township engineer.

The township engineer reports he has acted as the planning board's engineer, under a professional service agreement, for more than ten years. Per this agreement, the township pays the engineer on a monthly basis. Annually, these payments totaled approximately \$20,000 in 1997. In 1998, the payments were anticipated to be \$25,000. This is in addition to the annual salary of \$97,000. The engineer reported that he reviews the plans submitted to the planning board and provides comments for the planning board and attends meetings as part of his professional service contract. According to the engineer's own estimate, he spends

approximately 25% of his regular workday on planning board-related duties. These duties include plan review, initial preparation of the engineering reports for the planning board meetings and attending planning board meetings held during the day. The balance of his day is spent on other engineering-related matters and on general department matters.

It appears that the township engineer is handling the professional service work during his regular work hours, in essence, being paid twice for the same hours. The invoices he submits for payment are for meetings he attends as the planning board engineer. More than two thirds of these meetings are held during the regular workday. If one assumes that the extra payments are just for attendance at the evening meetings, we compute the engineer is being paid approximately \$297 per hour. This is based on approximately 21 evening meetings held each year, each lasting approximately four hours.

In addition, interviews and discussions with department staff indicated the assistant planner writes up the formal engineering reports, during his regular township work hours using engineering information provided by the engineer. The assistant planner then gives the reports that he has prepared to the planning board secretary to type during her regular township work hours. Additionally, the team learned that the township engineer also has the planning board secretary type the bills he submits for his contract work. It appears that the engineer is using township staff to perform work for him as a private consultant during their regular township work hours.

The monthly method of payment for the professional services appears to contradict state law. N.J.S.A. 40A:5-16 which provides that a local unit shall not make payment for any services rendered unless the person claiming such payment renders a detailed bill specifying particularly how the bill was made up. In addition, the vendor must provide a certification that the bill is correct.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township discontinue the practice of providing additional payment to the township engineer for planning board engineering services. These duties are, according to the township code, part of his regular duties as township engineer.

Cost Savings: \$25,000

If the township chooses not to have engineering reviews for the planning board done in-house, we then recommend the township use a request for proposals to ensure that the prices for all professional services are competitive. Further, we recommend the township engineer immediately discontinue using township staff to perform work for which the township is paying under a professional service contract.

We recommend that any professional service contract payments comply with the requirements of the Local Fiscal Affairs Law.

Environmental Engineering

The township created the environmental engineer position in 1997 and employed a licensed professional environmental engineer. The township created this position to provide in-house advice on environmental contamination and remediation. Previously, the code enforcement officer handled environmental issues when and if time allowed. It is our understanding that this position is limited by contract to two years.

The township also employs a conservation officer. The conservation officer is more fully discussed in the division of conservation portion of this report. Having a professional individual, knowledgeable in the area of environmental issues, is a positive step, which will help to alleviate residents' concerns regarding environmental issues the township is facing.

We commend the township for recognizing the importance of the environmental issues it is facing and taking the initiative to hire an environmental professional to address the township's and residents' needs and concerns.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township make this a permanent position due to the various environmental issues facing the township as well as the long-term implications of these issues.

Environmental issues involving the Dover Township landfill appear to be complex. The team was told that matters relating to the landfill environmental issues are being handled through the township law department exclusively, and do not involve the environmental staff. The township has hired both environmental attorneys and environmental engineers to work on the issues surrounding this property. The township administrator reported that the township had employed special legal counsel to represent it in this matter, and the legal counsel has successfully asserted claims against the appropriate insurers.

Division of Conservation

The township employs a conservation officer. The conservation officer is responsible for reviewing soil erosion plans, issuing permits for tree removal, handling the adopt-a-dune, gypsy moth, and flood insurance programs. The conservation officer also acts as advisor to the environmental commission, and, due to his computer skills, is also assisting with the digitization of the township tax maps. He also performs site inspections concerning the soil erosion and township environmental ordinances when necessary. There is also a secretary assigned part-time to this division. In FY98, salary and wage expenditures totaled \$79,726. Other expenses were \$2,058. The total budget expenditures were \$82,174. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$123,558.

The township collects fees for the various environmental services and inspections performed. The fees collected for soil erosion permits and inspections are the most substantial. The fees charged are mandated/limited by the state. The environmental fees collected in 1997 totaled

\$48,985, and through April of 1998 totaled \$84,060. These fees fluctuate from year to year based on the amount of development going on in a given year. These fees are used to offset the salaries and supplies needed by this division.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township combine the environmental and conservation divisions as is shown on the organizational charts provided to the team, into the division of environmental planning as is outlined in the township code. This will eliminate the redundancy in having two such divisions and should assist in coordinating the efforts of the staff.

Division of Engineering

There are five staff persons in this division including the assistant township engineer, a secretary, two engineering inspectors and a tax map draftsman. This division is involved with estimating performance guarantees and bonds, insurance certificates, development permits, final construction inspections for engineering projects and exterior site improvements installed, digitization of the township tax maps and some department personnel matters.

Salary and wages for the engineering staff in FY98 totaled \$440,536. Other expenses totaled \$8,962 for a total of \$449,498. Benefits added \$229,273 to the wage cost for this department.

During FY97, the township spent \$84,683 in other expenses in the engineering budget. The reason the expenses declined from 1997 to 1998 was the 1997 professional environmental services for the township landfill at a cost of \$76,583.

This division handles yearly contracts for sidewalks and overlays to be installed and/or repaired, which supports the township's School Walking Program. The department also typically handles a new road construction project or rebuilding of an old road each year, usually with State DOT funding. There are two inspectors to handle all the engineering inspections throughout the township. The assistant engineer is involved in a lot of the routine day-to-day paperwork of the department that would be better handled by the clerical staff of the office, freeing him to do engineering inspections.

The township hires consulting engineers for large-scale projects. Engineering then administers the projects. An example project would be the repair or installation of bulkheads or storm water out-fall pipes. The department appears to have a good handle on state funding opportunities.

The department handles many complaints for flooding problems. The division staff investigates and makes recommendations for resolution of the problems identified. This division works closely with the public works department on drainage and road issues in the township. However, there seemed to be some animosity between the two departments and the lines of communication between the two are probably not what they should be.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township assign the assistant township engineer a more active role in the engineering inspection and oversight of contracted projects for the township. In addition, the clerical staff for the department should be used more efficiently to handle day-to-day paperwork.

Buildings and Grounds

The buildings and grounds division is currently included as a function of the engineering department. The function used to be under the personnel office; however, when that office was abolished the function was given to engineering. There is currently a part-time supervisor for this division, who is paid out of the emergency management budget. Four janitors staff this division. In FY98, salary and wages totaled \$105,636, with overtime pay of \$4,532, and other expenses of \$74,920, for a total expenditure of \$233,655. This represents an increase of approximately 9% over FY97. Benefits added \$67,405 to the wage expense in this division.

The supervisor of buildings and grounds, as of this writing, has five other titles/positions for which he is responsible. As supervisor of buildings and grounds he is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of town hall and apparently acts in an advisory capacity in this role for police and the DPW. There are two full-time janitorial positions assigned to cleaning, minor repair and maintenance of the municipal building. The team was told that although this two-person crew was responsible for cleaning the municipal building, they “don’t do bathrooms.” There are also two individuals working during the day at the police department on cleaning and maintenance. Staff members in both buildings complained about the lack of cleanliness in the buildings. A cleaning contractor handles the DPW offices.

The township has hired a separate cleaning firm to clean the bathrooms and perform other cleaning tasks in the municipal building. This is a 19-month contract and works out to cost approximately \$.38 per square foot of space. This is the lowest price the team has ever seen for contracted cleaning services, however, it appears the township is getting minimal service. There is no one assigned to supervise the work done in the evenings by the contract firm. It was observed by the team that this lack of supervision was a problem, as all that was being done in the evenings was emptying the garbage and occasional vacuuming. The team observed, and various employees mentioned, the floors, sinks and other bathroom facilities were not being cleaned on a regular basis. This was evident, as cigarette butts, ashes, soap, and paper, were on the bathroom floors, and mirrors were streaky. These observations were brought to the attention of the township engineer. Afterwards, more of an effort was being made to perform some of the cleaning contract tasks, but by no means were the bathrooms “clean.” The office and bathroom areas in the public works facility appeared to be clean.

It appears that there is a duplication of effort here, as there are township personnel assigned to clean the municipal building as well as an outside contract firm to do the same work. Neither the contractor nor the township staff was getting the work done. The team believes that two full-

time maintenance staff can accomplish routine maintenance. The cleaning duties would best be accomplished by contract at all facilities. We estimated the reduction in staff at the two lowest salaries.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township assign the supervision of all building maintenance workers, and the oversight of the private cleaning contract, to a department willing to take the time to supervise these employees and insure that the work is being done.

We recommend that primary responsibility for routine maintenance in each of these buildings be assigned to one of the employees.

Cost Savings: \$79,480

We recommend the township contract-out limited and specific cleaning services for the municipal building, public works and police headquarters, to be separate from maintenance of the buildings. The department occupying the building should monitor the work performed under this contract and enforce the contract provisions.

The team noted that many members of the staff who smoked did so at their workstation. It appeared that the township did not enforce NJ Department of Health requirements restricting smoking in a work place. The township should enforce the regulations concerning smoking in public buildings.

Emergency Management

The emergency management coordinator is a part-time position. In addition to the coordinator, there is one paid, part-time deputy coordinator, three volunteer deputy coordinators, and a clerical person assigned to this function on a part-time basis. The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) also supervises 18 auxiliary police. The police department handles the training of the auxiliary personnel. The OEM receives a \$7,500 grant annually from FEMA for keeping its Emergency Management Master Plan up-to-date. In FY98, salary and wages totaled \$44,055, with other expenses of \$4,904.

According to the township code, the OEM is supposed to be in the department of administration. Currently, it is based in the engineering department. The individual currently holding this title is employed full-time with the township and holds a number of different positions in the engineering department. It appears that other than during a time of emergency, the coordinator does little in the way of emergency management duties. As has been mentioned, he has five additional township titles and works full-time attempting to perform those duties. The part-time paid deputy coordinator is the individual who handles the day-to-day responsibilities of the office. The coastal areas and the Oyster Creek power plant are the OEM's main areas of concern and concentration.

The team believes that emergency management in a coastal community the size of Dover needs more regular attention. While perhaps not a full-time position, additional hours undistracted by other business, appear necessary. We estimate the additional hours will cost approximately \$10,000 per year.

Recommendation:

We recommend the position of emergency management coordinator be separated from other positions in the township.

Value Added Expense: \$10,000

Currently, the township does not pay the coordinator overtime for his OEM duties. He did indicate, however, that he does keep track of time worked outside of the office and does take compensatory time. The part-time deputy coordinator indicated that he is not eligible and does not receive overtime or compensatory time. Based on our review of the relevant ordinances, the team believes that compensatory time or additional pay is not authorized.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township review and enforce its policy regarding OEM staff and their eligibility or non-eligibility for overtime and/or compensatory time.

The township recently purchased a 1999 4-wheel drive Chevrolet Suburban for the OEM coordinator. The vehicle was special-ordered with leather interior and a CD player. It cost approximately \$40,000. This is an eight-cylinder, heavy-duty vehicle, intended for use during hurricanes, snowstorms, and other weather emergencies. Ordering a deluxe model vehicle for any function is not a prudent use of public funds. We estimate the luxury items cost \$6,000. In addition, the township has assigned this to the OEM coordinator who is also the housing code enforcement officer. Accordingly, this vehicle is also being used for routine transportation to perform housing inspections.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the township assign this vehicle to the emergency management coordinator, recommended above, and not put unnecessary mileage on this expensive vehicle for uses other than what it is intended.

We recommend the township administration review the specifications for vehicles being ordered by the various departments more closely to ensure that the taxpayers' money is not being wasted ordering luxury vehicles for township employees.

One-time Cost Savings: \$6,000

The emergency management coordinator is also the safety coordinator for the township. Safety issues are more fully discussed in the Insurance section of this report.

The emergency management coordinator/code enforcement officer/building maintenance supervisor/safety coordinator breaks his time down as follows: 20% HUD home renovation inspections, 30% housing/property maintenance inspections, 25% emergency management/safety, and 25% building maintenance.

Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation for the township is handled by a clerical support person who also acts as secretary to the safety officer/emergency management coordinator, secretary to the environmental engineer and backup for the engineering department support staff. The issues related to workers' compensation are employee and policy issues that are normally a function of the personnel office. Currently, the personnel office is not involved in workers' compensation issues/cases until legal issues arise.

Recommendation:

We recommend the workers' compensation function be moved, along with the safety function, to the personnel office and that the clerical support person assigned to these functions be relocated to personnel as well.

Housing/Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement

The code enforcement officer retired in June of 1998 and this function has been absorbed into the housing and property maintenance division. The team has been informed that the title of code enforcement officer was given to the supervisor of housing and property maintenance, who holds five other titles. The team was also informed that this division will be filling an existing vacant inspector's position and that an additional inspector's position is being added. Discussions with the finance department for the township indicate that the staff for housing and property maintenance is fully charged to the CDBG budget, as is the code enforcement function. This was not reflected in the CDBG budget provided to the team for review, and requests for clarification or confirmation of the funding for these positions/functions provided conflicting information.

Recommendation:

We suggest that the township payroll office and the CDBG program administrator coordinate their information as to which employees are being paid out of CDBG and what job responsibilities each of these employees has.

Providing or not providing appropriate and adequate code enforcement services will affect the property value and quality of life of the residents of the township. It is not in the best interests of the residents to eliminate this as a full-time position. Interviews with various members of the staff indicated that it would probably take two full-time positions to address the code issues and violations that exist, particularly in view of the time needed for rental housing inspections.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township reinstate the code enforcement officer position as a full-time position to ensure that code inspections are being done and that the quality of life in the township is not adversely affected. The township should review code issues and determine whether or not an additional full-or part-time employee would be warranted.

Value Added Expense: \$45,000

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The department of engineering and community development handles the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Officially, the program administrator is the township engineer; however, a member of the clerical staff handles the majority of work related to this and the HOPWA (Housing for People with AIDS) program. The budgeted amount for this program in 1998 was \$522,000, while the HOPWA budget was \$554,000.

The staff dealing with the CDBG and HOPWA programs appear to handle programs efficiently and, for the most part, effectively. The township hires a private consultant to handle the HUD application forms and submittal requirements and to assist with the action plan. The 1999 budget includes approximately \$28,000 for the consultant services. A review of the program funding indicates that there has been very little programmatic change in the structure or goals of the plan of the township. It appears that the township staff, if appropriately assigned work tasks, could handle the paperwork in-house. The township could redirect the funds currently spent on the consultant to hire an additional entry-level clerical person to assist with the program and generally in the department. There would be little to no additional cost to the township as it would be a reallocation of existing funds and would provide additional staffing in the department. The township should reallocate any funds spent for consultants for the HOPWA grant as well.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township handle the entire CDBG program administration in-house rather than hiring an outside consulting service to handle the paperwork.

Cost Savings: \$28,000

Value Added Expense: \$25,000 - \$28,000

In the last four years money has been allocated to a first-time homebuyer program; however, none of it has been spent. The affordable housing coordinator is in charge of this program, and the township pays an additional stipend for the position. When questioned, he was unaware of this program or any guidelines for it. There was some confusion as to where the money in this program originates. It is listed on the CDBG expenditure printout; however, the team was told that this money actually comes from developer fees charged for new construction. No explanation was available as to why these moneys were listed under the CDBG budget if they did not originate here.

During the review, the team noted allocations for a downtown coordinator and fair-share housing coordinator. The fair-share coordinator was/is evidently part of an interlocal agreement for these services. The township allocated money for this position in both 1996 and 1997, but it was not spent. The CDBG program administrator did not know why this money was not spent and did not have a copy of any interlocal agreement that may have existed in the past.

Recommendation:

We recommend the governing body review the various programs included in its consolidated plan. In consultation with HUD, it should determine which programs should be eliminated due to inactivity or lack of interest, and then reallocate the moneys to more appropriate programs.

UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION CODE (UCC)

The division of permits and inspections (uniform construction code) is part of the department of engineering and community development. It handles all matters relating to the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code (UCC) and the related inspections, plan review, building permits and certificates of occupancy. It is on the state computer system, "Uniform Construction Code Automated Reporting System (UCCARS)." Dover Township is very busy with new construction, additions and renovations for both residential and commercial developments. The township issued 4,076 new permits and 900 updated permits during FY98. Total permits issued in 1998 represented \$78,365,510 in construction value. Dover is among the top 10 municipalities in the State of New Jersey for number of permits and value of construction.

Staff includes a construction official, building sub-code official, three building inspectors, one plumbing sub-code official, one full-time and one part-time plumbing inspector, one permit control person and four clerical support staff. These total 12.5 full-time equivalent staff positions. The township contracts out for the equivalent of two fire sub-code and two electric sub-code officials. Accordingly, the total is 16.5 full-time positions. In 1998, salary and wages totaled \$408,079. Other expenses were \$112,622. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$656,832.

Financial

Construction code revenues are dedicated for construction code (UCC) purposes within the municipal current fund budget. Revenue exceeding expenses is transferred to the municipal surplus. As is allowed by the NJ Department of Community Affairs, the township allocates direct and indirect wages, benefits, and other overhead against the revenue generated from permit fees. When revenue is significantly above or below expenses over time, the municipality must consider reviewing both the operational needs of the construction code office and the fees charged for the permits.

In the past three completed budget years, the township has accumulated a total of \$318,680 in the current fund surplus from UCC operations. Over the last five budget years, the surplus amount is \$905,836. The Department of Community Affairs recommends that surplus should not exceed

20% or \$100,000 over a three-year period. Dover has significantly exceeded this limit in the last five years. It is the intent of the of the NJ Administrative Code that surplus moneys be appropriated for UCC staffing and other expenses when needed. The team believes that while the fees are more than supporting the operation, the township also needs to provide adequate funding to this division for supplies and equipment.

Staffing

The NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) performed a staffing analysis for the UCC-related activities. DCA has determined that the township has understaffed this division based on the number of permits issued. The staff analysis recommended that the township hire 4.5 additional staff persons. The additional staffing needs include two additional building inspectors, two clerical support persons and an additional half-time plumbing inspector. These numbers are based on permit activity in the township and would be funded through permit revenues and not the current fund. We estimate that funding these positions will require approximately \$150,000.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township hire the necessary additional staff.

Value Added Expense: \$150,000

The township currently has two agreements that provide for electric and fire sub-code inspections. Ocean County provides the township with electric sub-code inspections. The Joint Fire District Bureau of Fire Prevention provides fire sub-code inspection. While the construction official indicated his preference is to have direct control over the staff, it appears the service agreements are working satisfactorily to date. Ocean County had previously provided plumbing sub-code services to the township as well, but had downsized its staff and was no longer providing this service. The township hired an inspector formerly with Ocean County for its plumbing sub-code position.

We commend the township for its participation in interlocal agreements for UCC services.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township periodically review the costs involved with the level of services provided through the interlocal agreements, to insure they are competitive.

The permit control person also holds the titles of assistant zoning officer and affordable housing coordinator. Conflicting information on the duties and responsibilities of this individual were provided to the team. The township may not use construction code budget to fund the salary of non-construction code staff. The team learned that the zoning officer's salary was paid through the construction code budget.

Zoning matters in the township are very active and the assistant zoning officer indicated he spends at least half of his time on zoning-related matters. The permit control position is also a

very busy position. While the team understands the combining of part-time jobs can be effective, it appears that the volume of work in each of these titles makes combining them ineffective. Were the township to reorganize the duties of the zoning officer as recommended in that portion of the report, sufficient staff time may exist for the zoning functions to be handled without an assistant.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township separate the titles of UCC control person and assistant zoning officer and have separate individuals filling the positions.

Technology

The staff repeatedly expressed to the team the need for funding for microfilming of files and additional fire-proof filing cabinets, especially for microfilm. In addition, the team noted the need for updated computer hardware and software. The team estimated that microfilming would cost approximately \$5,000 per year. Additionally, we estimate that fire-proof cabinets would cost approximately \$1,000. Upgrading the computer system would cost approximately \$5,000.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township provide the necessary funding for microfilming of files and provide adequate fire-proof filing cabinets for the files. We also recommend upgrading the computer hardware and software for this office.

One-time Value Added Expense: \$11,000

The construction code office customers rely heavily on telephone contact with the office to schedule inspections and provide information to various sub-code officials. Most of the inspectors in this office spend a large percentage of their time in the field. Accordingly, telephone messages are often the only means to communicate with an inspector. Telephone contact becomes a significant point of dissatisfaction if it is not working well for the customers. During the field work portion of our review the team noted that phone calls to this office were routinely either not answered or were answered only after the phone was left to ring eight or more times. This occurred because the office staff was occupied on other telephone calls. The office staff spends a great deal of time assisting customers at the counter and answering the telephones. The team believes a voice-mail option would be warranted here and would be welcomed by both the employees and the customers. Many calls to this office are to schedule appointments for inspections and voice-mail would insure the calls are answered and messages received. The team understands the existing township telephone system has voice-mail capability, but that senior management has resisted activating this feature for fear that the staff would misuse it.

Recommendation:

We recommend the voice-mail feature be activated for the telephone lines in the office of permits and inspections.

The housing inspectors for CDBG and code enforcement are also located in the same office space as permits and inspections. The UCC permit staff ends up answering calls for these inspectors in addition to its own work. This is a significant burden as these inspectors are frequently in the field.

The percentage of office space allocated to the housing inspectors appears excessive as compared to the remaining office space and staffing level. It appears that the office space being used by the housing inspectors was inappropriately charged to the UCC expense line. In addition, using the UCC control and support staff to support the housing inspection function is an inappropriate use of the UCC staffing/funding. These are separate functions with separate funding sources and should be handled accordingly.

Recommendation:

We recommend the housing inspectors be relocated to the engineering office, where their supervisor is located. This will free up office space for better and more appropriate use of the space by the division of permits and inspections. In the interim, we recommend separate additional clerical support be provided to the housing inspection function until the inspectors are relocated.

LAW DEPARTMENT

The law department staff consists of a full-time municipal attorney, a senior attorney, a junior assistant attorney (both part-time) and two full-time clerical staff. The township hires outside counsel as needed, typically for environmental, tax appeal, labor relations and affordable housing matters. Salary and wages paid for 1998 were \$193,280 and \$9,225, other expense (OE) total for 1998 expenditures was \$202,505. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$283,749. In addition, in 1997 and 1998, the law department spent \$72,815 and \$142,444, respectively, on outside professional services, which was separate from its OE.

The municipal attorney handles all legal matters relating to the township committee and provides it with advice as necessary. He also prepares and reviews resolutions and ordinances for the various township departments as well as advising them on legal matters. He attends township committee meetings and any other meetings deemed necessary by the committee. He also handles some work related to tax appeals and limited litigation.

Recommendation:

We recommend the law department provide each department with a standard format and language for routine resolutions. This could simply be a copy of previously adopted resolutions. The various township departments should then prepare their own resolutions for review by the township attorney. This would increase the availability of the township attorney for more substantial legal work and the recommended additional activities.

The township attorney feels the current structure of the law department is sufficient to handle the caseload. The workload varies, but the township attorney feels it has been quiet in the last few years, and he has been able to handle things very well.

The township attorney's office does not handle legal matters for the rent-leveling board, the parking authority, or the board of health. In the rent-leveling section of this report, the team recommends the township attorney also represent that board. In the parking authority section of this report, the team recommends that the parking authority be absorbed into the township organization. In the health and human services section of this report, we recommend the legal work for the board of health be provided by the township attorney. Should these recommendations be implemented, we anticipate the limited legal work associated with these organizations would be absorbed by the township attorney's office.

The senior assistant municipal attorney, part-time, handles most township matters involving litigation. He has his own private law practice in addition to his employment by the township. It was indicated that he works approximately 20 hours a week for the township. He receives no benefits from the township other than FICA, the PERS pension membership, and paid vacation. According to payroll records, he earns approximately \$35,000 per year working for the township.

The assistant municipal attorney handles the in rem tax foreclosures, does some litigation, research and occasionally covers meetings for the municipal attorney. He works approximately 15 hours a week (two days), but receives no benefits as a part-time employee other than FICA, and membership in the pension system. According to payroll records, he makes approximately \$20,000 per year working for the township. He is in the office two days each week and is available for additional meetings as needed. He works full-time for a local law firm that also handles the labor relations of the township.

It appears the use of part-time attorneys has worked well for the township to date.

Outside Professional Services

In addition to the part-time attorneys on staff, the township has a number of professional service agreements for outside counsel. The township attorney reported that outside counsel handles most matters relating to major tax appeals, affordable housing, labor relations and environmental concerns. The hiring of experts in the field, at times, makes sense. However, the hiring of outside counsel on a regular basis may not be cost-efficient when compared to the cost of a part-time attorney on staff.

Many of the contracts for outside legal services are handled through the township law department; however, the labor relations counsel is hired through the administrator's office. The amount spent on contract legal work doubled from 1997 to 1998. In 1997, the law department spent \$72,815. In 1998, it spent \$142,444. Some of these contracts appear to be on an annual basis for tax appeals and environmental matters.

The township attorney stated that solicitation of proposals for contract attorneys rarely occurred. While the local public contracts law does not require the township to solicit proposals for professional services, obtaining proposals from qualified law firms would assure the township it is paying a market price to the firm it selects.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township review its use of outside legal firms, particularly for those instances where the same firm/service appears to be needed year after year. The township should determine if it would be more prudent for it to use in-house attorneys for recurring activity and verify that it is paying a competitive fee for contracted work.

The township has a number of legal service contracts that are based on lump sum amounts. Other contracts are based on hourly rates plus expenses, with a not-to-exceed amount specified. One of the benefits of the lump sum contract is that a department will know what it will be spending from the beginning of the year. Both the planning and zoning board staffs use this method of contracting. The hourly rate contracts can be useful with less predictable legal work.

We commend the township for using both methods of contracting, based on the type of legal service being required, and encourage a periodic review of the contracts to determine if changes are warranted.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The department of health and human services covers a diverse group of functional areas, including public assistance, youth services, senior services, and the health department. We have reviewed each area separately.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Dover Township Welfare Department administers public assistance to adults without dependent children. State regulations require the local welfare office to refer individuals with dependent children to the county welfare department. A Local Assistance Board (LAB) oversees the operation of the department. The board meets four times per year. The township employs a full-time welfare director, assistant welfare director, and income maintenance worker. Additionally, the office employs one part-time clerical staff person. The 1998 salary and wage

expenses were \$109,909. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$173,929. The other expenses totaled \$4,286. The other-expense figure does not include benefits paid to clients, as the state provides these funds for distribution by the municipality.

The director reports that until November, 1997, the office also had a full-time investigator. The township abolished this position and transferred the individual to another department of the township.

This office has also administered welfare for the Borough of South Toms River since March of 1996 through a contract between the municipalities. The contract provides for South Toms River to reimburse Dover \$10,900 in 1998 for this service. Until January of 1998, Ocean Township also contracted with Dover for welfare administration. In January, Ocean Township consolidated its welfare with Ocean County.

We commend the township and the borough for establishing the interlocal agreement as a means of operating more efficiently.

General

The Dover Welfare Office is a full-time office, operating five days per week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The staff handles emergencies at night and on weekends as needed. Those needing emergency assistance can contact the welfare staff via the police department. The director reports that call-outs occur approximately two or three times per week.

The caseload for the first five months of 1998 averaged 98. The staff reports that this has been the caseload for the past year. The general assistance statistical summary provided to the team by the director indicates that just over half of these cases were employable persons. The rest were not employable due to temporary or permanent disabilities, or suspended from receiving benefits.

On average, the staff opened 18 new cases each month, with the overwhelming majority applying for benefits due to unemployment. Other reasons recorded were typically temporary illness, or pending assistance from another program such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). An average of 16 cases were closed each month for various reasons such as reemployment, receipt of other aid, failure to report to an interview at the welfare office, and failure to cooperate.

The director noted that she felt an investigator would be effective in finding cases where persons on welfare were actually working, and feels the caseload would be lower if she had an investigator on staff. Currently, the staff does case screening and follow up in the office, with virtually no fieldwork being done.

Financial

The LAB has two accounts through which assistance funds are received and disbursed. These accounts are public assistance trust account PTAF I and PTAF II. The LAB established these accounts at the direction of the department of human services approximately six years ago when the state began reimbursing municipalities for 100% of public assistance. Previously, the state

and the municipality shared the cost of assistance. In order to facilitate the transition, the PTAF II account was established to handle reimbursements under the new funding arrangement. The PTAF I account continued to exist to handle reimbursements for cases being handled under the old funding arrangement.

As expected, the PTAF I account has become increasingly dormant over time. The last activity recorded on a bank statement was in September, 1997, which was a transfer of funds from the PTAF II account to transfer a misdirected reimbursement. As of May, 1998, the PTAF I account balance was \$16,852.

The welfare office does not have a petty cash fund.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the LAB seek approval from the NJ Department of Health and Human Services to transfer the PTAF I account balance to the township's current fund, and close the PTAF I account.

One-time Revenue Enhancement: \$16,852

Consolidation

In March 1997, the state enacted Chapters 37 and 38 of the laws of 1997, commonly known as the Work First New Jersey Act. This legislation redesigned the welfare system in New Jersey by focusing on personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. Assistance is still provided to those in need, but only for limited periods of time while individuals seek work and become self sufficient.

The legislation mandated the consolidation of municipal welfare departments into each county welfare department during 1998, unless the municipal governing body affirmatively acted to retain the welfare program. In October 1997, the Dover Township Committee adopted a resolution to retain welfare as a municipal function. During several interviews on this subject Dover officials expressed confidence that the municipal welfare operation was well-run. They also expressed concerns over the uncertainties surrounding the ability of the county to absorb the county-wide volume of welfare cases efficiently while providing quality case management. Dover officials' felt it would be impossible to re-create an effective welfare department in the event the county was unable to handle the work involved.

The director and staff also expressed valid concerns about the future implementation of the new law. These concerns are included in the section on recommendations for statutory/regulatory reforms. According to the director, in addition to several technical/regulatory problems, it appears that the new law did not completely replace the requirements of Title 44 of the New Jersey Statutes. In particular the director noted the burial of indigents and the obligation to care for chronically indigent people even after the five-year limit on benefits runs out. The director reports that these responsibilities remain with the municipality under the new law.

The team reviewed these concerns with other professionals knowledgeable about public assistance. While it is true that a municipality continues to have the obligation to bury deceased indigents, it is an infrequent occurrence. The Dover director recalled only one case.

The concern for individuals whom the welfare system releases after their five-year eligibility ends is one shared by many public assistance professionals. Most agree that there is a small sub-set of public assistance clients who, by reason of mental infirmity or personality disorder, are not likely to hold a meaningful job for any length of time. Those that do not have a family or others with the means to support them, will become homeless and have limited means of support shortly after they are released from the work first program. As currently fashioned, the work first program will no longer provide assistance.

The question that will confront municipalities and counties when the benefits run out is, who will be responsible for these people. While no clear-cut answer exists, the concern is limited to a relatively small sub-set of the client population, and because it affects every municipality and county, many believe a legislative solution will be forthcoming.

The director also expressed concern that the clients handled by the municipal general assistance program are different from the clients handled by the county through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. She felt they were more likely to be transient and often had difficult problems, requiring intensive case management.

The team contacted the Ocean County Social Services Coordinator who is responsible for the integration of the municipal welfare clients into the county system. The coordinator agreed that the municipal clients are transient; however, he noted they usually remain within the same county. He also estimated that 80 - 90% of the municipal clients are also county clients through the food stamp program.

The coordinator noted that the county had successfully incorporated the municipal welfare clientele for most of Ocean County. The county screens clients on intake, and staff social workers identify client barriers to successfully getting off welfare. The coordinator felt that while a municipal welfare staff may have better personal knowledge about an individual's personal history, the county staff may have a better total picture of the client needs and resources available.

The coordinator was confident that the county staff could properly handle 100 additional clients. He anticipates the impact will be less than expected because they are already seeing most of the individuals for food stamp benefits.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township committee reconsider its earlier decision to retain the welfare operation. Consolidation with the county appears to be both a cost-effective and qualitatively appropriate means to deliver welfare services. We compute the annual saving as the current cost of wages, benefits and other expenses. An annual revenue loss will occur because of the South Toms River contract being discontinued.

**Cost Savings: \$178,215
Revenue Loss: \$10,000**

HEALTH AND VITAL STATISTICS

The township has a health department that is responsible for animal control and vital statistics. The Ocean County Board of Health and Health Department provide other health functions, such as sanitary inspections of restaurants, medical clinics, and septic system construction inspection in Dover. The township committee has appointed a local board of health that serves in a voluntary capacity. Since the county acted to create a county board of health in 1978, the local boards in Ocean County have a limited role in administering health regulations.

According to the board staff, the Dover Board of Health meets monthly. Its meetings last approximately 15 to 20 minutes, and consist primarily of approving a bill list for payment. Occasionally the board will receive and discuss information concerning the cancer cluster currently being researched by various parties.

The Dover Health Department salary and wage expenses for 1998 were \$68,134, including approximately \$1,800 in overtime wages. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$101,333. These wages were for the staffing of the vital statistics office and a part-time pool staff person. The animal control staff wages are charged to the animal control trust account. The other expenses of the health department were \$121,573, for a 1998 total expenditure of \$189,707. Of the other expenses, the township transfers \$110,000 to the animal control trust account to subsidize the cost of the animal control operation not supported by dog and cat license fees. The balance of the other expenses is \$11,581. The board of health spends over half of this amount (\$6,000) for contracted legal counsel. In light of the extremely limited authority of the board, the appointment of a separate legal counsel does not appear to provide much value to the township.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township committee dissolve the board of health. Should it desire, the committee could reestablish the board as an advisory board.

We recommend the township and board discontinue the board's contract for legal service. The township attorney can provide the occasional legal work that may be required or special counsel hired as needed.

Cost Savings: \$6,000

Revenue

The department generated \$170,274 in revenue from all sources during the calendar year 1997, and \$164,063 in 1996. Of the 1997 total, \$112,246 was related to vital statistics, almost all related to birth and death certificates and marriage licenses. Of this amount, \$12,975 was paid to the State of New Jersey.

Food Handling and Vending Machine Licenses

Other than recording vital statistics and operating the animal control division, the health department sells food handling permits and vending machine licenses. The Ocean County Department of Health does the inspections of food handling businesses and vending machines. Because the township requires a license for food handling establishments and vending machines, the county enforces the requirement for a license. In towns where no license is required, the county performs the same inspection. The township provides no additional inspection or enforcement of this licensing requirement. The board secretary reports that the township collected \$7,825 for 362 food handling licenses and \$230 for 39 vending machine licenses in 1997.

Normally, our review of fees would include reviewing the cost of providing a service to determine if the fees were adequate. In the case of the vending and food handling licenses, it appears that other than printing and distributing the license form, the township is providing no service. The existence of a license does not assist the county in performing its inspections. Indeed, the county inspection prompts a business owner to obtain the township license. We estimated the cost of preparing and mailing these licenses at roughly \$4,000. We have not included the cost of reminder notices or telephone calls or other collection activities by the staff. We anticipate the additional time available will be more than occupied with animal control activity proposed in the animal control section of this report.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township abolish the need for food handling or vending machine licenses.

Revenue Reduction: \$8,055

Cost Savings: \$4,000

Animal Control

The township operates an animal control division. While technically part of the health department, the division reports to the police department for line supervision.

The division collects stray or nuisance animals, primarily dogs and cats, and operates a shelter on Whitesville Road to house the animals. The animal control staff also enforces the running-at-large and other animal control ordinances, facilitates the adoption of animals, and coordinates the free rabies vaccination clinics. Licenses are sold in town hall by the same staff that handles the vital statistic work.

This division operates with a full-time director/chief animal control officer (ACO), one full-time ACO, one part-time ACO, and one part-time kennel aid. Additionally, the shelter benefits from the efforts of approximately 10 volunteers per month. The director and other animal control officers have all obtained the animal control officer certification from the NJ Department of Health and Human Services. No training has been provided by the township for the past two years. The director has been the chief ACO for 13 years.

For FY98, the animal control salaries and wage expenditures were \$101,480. The fully-loaded costs were \$150,347.

Licensing

Dover licenses both dogs and cats, although it appears that few cat owners are obtaining a cat license. Cat license revenue was \$4,297 in 1997, representing 748 licenses. Dog license revenue was \$36,271 for 1997, representing 4,406 licenses. Of this amount, \$8,611 was collected for the State of New Jersey.

The chief animal control officer estimated that 10,000 unlicensed dogs live in Dover. The team believes this estimate to be accurate. The American Veterinary Medical Association – Center for Information Management reports that nationally 28% of households own one or more dogs. Those households own, on average, 1.5 dogs. Based on 30,641 non-seasonal households reported in the 1990 census, the formula suggests the dog population in Dover is at least 16,362 and may be as high as 24,500. Similar statistics suggest the cat population is at least 18,323.

The township conducted its last dog canvass in 1986. N.J.S.A. 4:19-15.15 requires that municipalities conduct a dog canvass at least every two years. We believe that aggressive licensing enforcement would result in near universal licensing. If just 10,000 of the unlicensed dogs were licensed at the lowest fee of \$6.20 for spayed/neutered dogs, we estimate that dog license revenue would increase by \$62,000. This estimate will be significantly higher if these dogs are not spayed/neutered and/or if late fees or court fines are due the township.

Conducting a through canvass for dogs can be accomplished with summer help employees. Based on dog canvass staffing in other communities, we estimate four full-time seasonal staff can complete a census in Dover. We compute that hiring four full-time seasonal canvassers for seven weeks at \$10 per hour will cost \$11,200.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township comply with the statute concerning the dog canvass.

Value Added Expense: \$11,200

We recommend the township enforce the dog-licensing ordinance.

Revenue Enhancement: \$62,000

The township committee adopted a cat licensing ordinance approximately eight years ago. Unlike dogs, state law does not require municipalities to license cats. Judging from the small number of licenses issued and the limited enforcement, it appears that the public and committee are not convinced of the benefits of cat licensing. Accordingly, the public appears to have accorded the ordinance scofflaw status.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township committee review this ordinance and determine if cat licensing is desirable or not. The committee should then act to either repeal or enforce the ordinance.

The chief ACO reports that her staff issues between 30 and 40 running-at-large summonses per month. The team notes that active leash law enforcement provides an important public health service for the control of rabies and animal bites. It also provides a quality of life and safety function by controlling dogs upsetting trash, chasing bicyclists and running into traffic.

Shelter

The chief ACO is also in charge of the Dover Animal Shelter. The shelter is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday from noon to 2:00 p.m. for residents to reclaim or surrender animals. The weekend hours are part of the routine schedule for the staff and do not result in routine overtime.

We commend the ACO for the creative scheduling that provides weekend hours for citizens to conduct business.

The director reports the shelter receives between 120 and 130 cats each month and 35 and 60 dogs. Police records reflect about 53 cats and 34 dogs per month during 1997. The difference in reported numbers appears to be animals that owners surrender. The director reports that of the cats received each month, 8% are adopted, 2% are reclaimed, and 90% are euthanized. Of the dogs received each month, 15% will be adopted, 60% reclaimed, and 25% euthanized. The township cremates the animals' remains at a commercial facility. The chief ACO reports that cremation costs \$.30 per pound. The township spent approximately \$2,520 on the disposal of animal remains in 1998. The chief ACO feels that the Dover facility may be an attractive option for those surrendering an animal because Dover only charges \$40 for euthanization and disposal as compared with veterinarian charges ranging from \$50 to \$200.

The fee for reclaiming a lost dog is \$4 plus \$4 per day. The team reviewed the county fees and found the county charges a \$25 administrative fee plus \$4 per day to owners reclaiming an animal.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township increase the fees for the various shelter services.

The shelter has 24 runs for dogs, and 20 cat cages. During the team's visit, the shelter was nearly at capacity. The shelter staff explained this as an attempt to keep animals available for adoption as long as possible before space limitations require euthanizing animals. The shelter telephone was very busy with incoming calls. The office had limited office equipment, other than a telephone answering machine and a very old typewriter.

The team also visited the northern Ocean County shelter operated by the county. The county animal shelter is one of two county-operated shelters, and is located about three miles from the Dover shelter. The county shelter was also near capacity at the time of our visit. The county shelter staff reported that expansion was constrained by environmental regulations affecting the site.

Several of those interviewed reported that the township proposed to close the shelter, and transfer the animal shelter operations to the county several years ago. This apparently met with some public resistance. The township committee was persuaded to retain the current operation. The proposal of the township was attractive partly due to the suggestion that the township could sell the shelter site as a residential building lot.

Considering the county is providing animal shelter services to most other municipalities as a county service, operating the shelter appears to be an unnecessary expense for Dover. However, the inability of the county to expand its shelter will probably make closing the Dover shelter unworkable when one considers the volume of animals involved. Dover officials may wish to discuss having the county operate the Dover shelter as a third county shelter. The animal control staff can be relocated to the police headquarters should the shelter be turned over to the county. The team estimated the township cost in operating the shelter at \$26,751. Our estimate includes shelter-operating expenses and veterinarian fees. We believe the township should transfer the kennel aid to an animal control position to enhance the animal control function in the township.

We estimate that the annual cost to the township for unclaimed strays in 1997 would have been approximately \$20,220 based on Dover's already participating in county health services. Were Dover to make the existing shelter available to the county, we believe the cost to Dover should be even lower.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township committee work toward transferring the shelter operation to the county and retain the current shelter staff to improve animal control services in the township.

Cost Savings: \$6,531

YOUTH SERVICES

The division of youth services operates within the department of human services. It operates two basic services during the year: an after-school and a summer program.

After-School Program

During the school year, the division conducts an after-school program. This program is free and open to all children of the community, but is targeted to youth who are latchkey children and who need a structured after-school program. The director reports that many of their clients are not able to afford other after-school programs in the community. She estimates only three or four clients are not low income. The program also provides free individual, group and family counseling to youth having trouble in school or with their families. The director and the assistant director provide the counseling. Each has been trained in basic counseling, and meets the NJ Division of Youth and Family Services requirements for counseling staff within an agency. The staff refers clients who need more assistance than they can provide, to other agencies.

The director reports that the facility can handle 60 youths. They have 55 youths registered; some for attendance on selected days, others for every day. Approximately 25 to 30 youths actually attend each day. During the winter break and spring break weeks, the youth center is open all day to accommodate working parents.

The division employs a director and an assistant director full-time. Two van drivers and two youth aides are employed part-time during the school year. The division employs six additional youth aides for the summer program. The 1998 salary and wage expenditures totaled \$90,804. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$161,772. The other expenses totaled \$7,729. The NJ Division of Youth and Family Services partially funds this program with a grant of \$41,939.

The director expressed frustration with the school administration regarding transportation. She was rebuffed when she had requested the school district allow students who attend her program to take a school bus to the youth center. She reports the district does cooperate with the local YMCA in bussing children to the Y's after-school program.

The transportation difficulty resulted in the youth center using a van to pick children up at their home after the school bus has dropped them off, and transport them to the youth center. Owing to the size of Dover and the limited number of vans, at time the van rides can be very long.

The director reported she had asked the township administration if private autos could be used to pick up children that live in a location distant from the others being picked up by the van. She reports that the township administration would not permit the use of private autos. The team is acquainted with other towns where private autos are used for town business. Alternatively, the township may consider allowing the program to use existing administrative vehicles for this purpose. We believe the township can address the legitimate security concerns of transporting citizens with portable radio communications. If the township chooses to permit the use of private autos, the township will need to verify that the owner properly insures the private autos used on township business. The team recognizes that the use of private autos will result in some mileage expense. We believe the cost will be offset by reduced mileage on the van.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township officials renew the director's request for cooperation from the school district.

We recommend the township consider permitting the use of administrative vehicles or private autos to transport some children.

Summer Program

The second program is a summer recreation program. Unlike the recreation department program, this program provides full day (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) recreational activities for youth ages 6 through 13. This eight-week program attracts approximately 200 youths. The fee for the program is \$150. The participants supply their own lunch. The program is very popular. The director reports turning as many as 200 applicants away. The program is very important to working parents. The fees were increased \$30 during 1997. The director reports that the local YMCA and other summer camps are charging \$300 for a two-week program, and \$800 for a summer-long program. She noted these programs often offered trips, and other amenities the township program does not offer.

The director noted the summer program is limited by the availability of indoor facilities for rainy days activities. The center has rented an office trailer for the summer program, and an addition was included in the 1999 capital budget. Were the township to increase the program fee to \$250 the additional \$20,000 in revenue would offset the cost of this division. The township could develop a sliding scale to accommodate lower income families.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township increase the fees for this program.

Revenue Enhancement: \$20,000

The director noted that while she and the assistant do not receive overtime, they often must stay late due to parents picking children up late. Late pick-ups of up to 15 minutes occurred nearly every day. Parents arrived up to 30 minutes late twice per week. Lateness beyond 30 minutes occurred approximately once every two weeks. The team is familiar with several programs that incorporate an extra period of child-care for an additional fee into their program. These programs typically charge late fees as well for those who are late picking up their children.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township establish an extended-day program and establish a fee structure that will permit the youth center director to schedule staff for the longer day.

The director reported that at times the summer counselors have had concerns in using the abutting park fields when other people in the community are attracted to the activities. Because the park abutting the youth center is not restricted to youth center activity during the program day, the director feels her authority to restrict access to non-participants is limited.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township committee establish an appropriate area of the park as off limits to the public during the summer program day.

The youth center has not conducted routine background checks on its staff. We believe that having background reviews for child-care workers is necessary for a diligent employment process.

The team understands these reports are available from the state police for \$25 if fingerprints are provided.

Recommendation:

We recommend the director have background reports done for each staff candidate.

Value Added Expense: \$250

SENIOR SERVICES

The division of senior services operates within the department of health and human services. The division provides recreational and counseling services to the senior citizens in the community. The division is staffed by the senior center director, who also serves as the director of human services, an assistant director, and one full-time van driver and one full-time program aide. Additionally, two part-time van drivers and three part-time clerks and program aides are employed. The division operates the township senior center, which provides both organized and informal recreational opportunities. The center is eight years old. The division uses two vans to transport participants without other means of transportation. The vans also serve to transport young people to the youth center during after school hours. Those interviewed noted that the division initiated the van service due to the large non-driving senior population coupled with the limited public transportation options for local travel. The director provides some informal counseling and screening for participants, and refers those needing more in depth assistance to a variety of other agencies, including NJ Ease and Adult Protective Services.

In 1998, the division expended \$184,613 in salaries and wages and \$77,245 in other expenses. The total expenditures were \$261,858. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$272,308. Approximately \$7,725 in overtime was paid to the director and assistant director in 1998. The maintenance of the facility and vans is provided through the recreation department, and is not included in these figures.

The county, state and federal governments participated in the division's operation through two grants. The Ocean County Aging grant provides \$51,000 for the senior center operation. A \$2,000 county transportation grant is used to partly fund driver salaries. The grants require that the services be provided at no cost to the participant; however, the grants do require participants be given an opportunity to contribute toward the service. Accordingly, both the senior center and vans have contribution boxes. The director reports that the income from the boxes is approximately \$1,000 per year. The township is required to keep the revenue from the boxes in trust for the benefit of the senior center operation.

The director reports that approximately 20% of the Dover population, or 17,600 are senior citizens. The staff estimated that the division has approximately 1,200 to 1,400 participants on a regular basis. The center has a registered membership of 1,140. Occasionally, a special event will result in a crowd of several thousand. We compute the annual cost per participant to be approximately \$200, not including the capital cost of the building. The staff reports 33 people are on the activity waiting list.

The division operates with the advice of a 21-member advisory board. The staff reported that the advisory board was active and was valuable in providing programmatic direction to the staff.

The first priority for van use is to transport people to medical appointments two days per week and at other times when possible; second, for scheduled grocery shopping groups; and third, to activities at the senior center. The staff schedules a total of eight to 10 medical trips, 12 shopping trips, and 10 activity trips each week. In the fall, additional trips are scheduled for gift shopping. Those interviewed stated that shopping trips were the most predictable use. The drivers came to know their clients and would make an extra stop when needed and would carry shopping bags, too. The staff reported that on average eight to 10 shoppers per trip were present. The second most predictable use is for activities. Line dancing, bingo, and the ladies club were the most popular activities for van riders. The staff reported 173 active clients for transportation, with 29 on a waiting list.

The division's activities are primarily grant-driven. Accordingly, any restructuring of the activities of this division must be reviewed with the relevant grant agencies so municipal officials understand the implications regarding the grants.

Volunteers generally run the programs, with the program aides providing the necessary organizational and scheduling work. The township purchases all supplies. Few programs have costs that require an additional fee. When that happens, the participants pay the extra expense.

The center staff collects relevant medical and other personal information from those willing to provide it. The staff uses the information to assist the staff direct the individual to other services. The staff reports they refer approximately 10 to 12 cases to adult protective services each year, and provide bereavement counseling to many other clients. The staff noted that the services provided have evolved over time because they are seeing the average age of the participants increase over time. We believe this is an indication that the center is not attracting younger seniors to its programs. Our impression is that this is simply a case of those who express an

interest receiving services. The staff exhibits a very customer-friendly approach to all their services, and provides a variety of incidental services such as assistance with income tax forms, homestead rebate forms, and notary public services.

We commend the senior services staff for their efforts to keep senior citizens active, safe, and independent.

PUBLIC WORKS

The public works department provides vital and very diverse services to the community. The department is headed by the director of public works and a deputy director. The director and deputy have achieved their certification as public works managers. In addition to the management staff, there are six staff people providing clerical and accounting support to the department, and one public works coordinator.

The department's budget is divided into sanitation, recycling, roads, and the sign shop. Functionally, the roads division contains many diverse functions including road repairs, street sweeping, public works building maintenance, storm sewer repairs and cleaning, and vehicle repair and maintenance. The roads division also handles the leaf composting operation and snow removal. The other division functions are more specific. The sanitation division is responsible for refuse collection and disposal, including bulk trash. The recycling division collects and disposes of recyclable material, including leaves. The sign shop primarily purchases and/or makes and installs traffic regulatory and other signs for the township.

In addition to the general functions noted above, the department operates a fuel facility which provides gasoline and diesel fuel to vehicles from the township, board of education, the fire districts, and the parking authority. The public works staff monitors the facility, arranges fuel drops, and prepares consumption reports for each user. Drivers are responsible for fueling their vehicles.

We commend the township for facilitating this cooperative operation.

The maintenance of buildings, street trees, parks & playgrounds and other vehicles is provided through the recreation department. The maintenance of police vehicles is provided in the police department. The department is also responsible for response to emergencies as needed.

The director has clearly established that the collection of refuse and recyclable refuse is the department's priority, requiring other divisions to assist as needed to ensure the trash routes are completed each day.

Personnel

The team was surprised to learn that the director had been appointed as the acting director for approximately four years before being named as the director. Additionally, the township

committee appointed the new deputy director approximately two years ago without input from the public works director. The deputy director's training and experience are in public works and vehicle maintenance.

In addition to the deputy director, the department administrative staff includes the public works coordinator position. This new position, created in early 1997 in place of another deputy director position, was filled by the township committee without input from the public works director. The coordinator's experience is as the former owner of a fuel oil company. Notably, the public works coordinator is a former mayor of Dover Township and currently serves as a Dover MUA Commissioner. The fully-loaded wage costs for this position are \$64,936.

In nearly all interviews the team inquired of each person what the understanding of the chain of command was, and what he/she understood the jobs of the supervisors to be. We found no one reporting to the coordinator. Additionally, the coordinator had limited duties assigned to him, primarily involving reviewing the reimbursements to condominium associations mandated by state law. While we understand that this position was advertised and interviews conducted by a personnel committee, we conclude that this position is not necessary and existing staff could handle the duties assigned.

Recommendations:

We recommend discontinuing the position of public works coordinator.

Cost Savings: \$64,936

We recommend that the department head be more fully involved in selecting the staff in the department.

SANITATION AND RECYCLING

The sanitation division is responsible for the collection of non-recyclable refuse in the township as well as the collection of leaves seasonally. Two supervisors, 16 drivers and 28 laborers staff this division, together with office support staff. The division operates 26 conventional (rear loading) trash trucks and six automated "robo" trucks.

The recycling division is responsible for the collection of the recyclables placed at the curb, and the operation of the convenience drop-off center at the public works center. This division is headed by two foremen and is staffed by 31 drivers. Unlike the sanitation division, the recycling trucks are two-man trucks where both crew members alternately drive and load. The recycling division operates 17 trucks for curbside collection, as well as a tractor-trailer and other heavy equipment for use in the recycling center.

In several interviews the team inquired about why the township established two foreman positions in sanitation and two in recycling. The team learned that both the size of the work force and the geographic dispersion of the crews were considerations; however, the predominant

consideration was the township vacation schedule. The foremen, because of their longevity of service, are each eligible for five or six weeks of vacation each year. Accordingly, in both the sanitation and recycling divisions, vacations reduce the supervisory staff to one foreman for approximately one quarter of the year.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township discontinue twice-per-week collection.

Cost Savings: \$110,000

We recommend the sanitation and recycling divisions be combined under one supervisor with two assistants rather than the four supervisors currently used.

Cost Savings: \$115,309

The township collects refuse and recyclables from all residential properties, including apartments and mobile home parks. The township also collects refuse from the public schools and the parochial schools. Township records show there are 35,239 residential properties. All businesses must arrange for their own refuse service.

Both ordinary household garbage and bulk trash are collected weekly for nine months per year. From June 15 to September 15 the schedule changes to twice weekly. The township is divided into five zones for the once-per-week collection and three zones for the twice-weekly collection.

The recycling collection occurs weekly. The schedule does not change in the summer. The recycling crews work in, the same zone as the sanitation crew, except in the summer, effectively minimizing the residents need to place material at the curb more than once per week. This minimizes the aesthetic effect of material at the curb and the disruption of the neighborhood with truck traffic more than one day per week.

Within the zones, routes have been established to facilitate the assignment of work. Currently, the township is divided into 74 trucks routes during the winter months. Over the past several years, the township has been converting sanitation routes to automated collection using “robo” trucks. These trucks facilitate the collection of household garbage with one-person trucks. At the time of our review, the township converted approximately 26 routes to automated trash, and two new automated trucks were on order.

The recycling division has also been upgrading its equipment, buying recycling trucks that do not require the material to be lifted as high by the crew, reducing fatigue and injuries.

Sanitation

The average number of stops per day for the sanitation division is 484. The township did not keep statistics on the number of stops each truck made each day. The team requested one robo

driver to track his stops during one day. That driver reported he collected 604 stops in one day. His schedule included one trip to the landfill, which took approximately one hour from the time he left the route to the time he returned to the route.

If we accept this report as typical for a robo route, the traditional routes are collecting less than the 484 average. The team computed a rear-loading truck average number of stops at 241 per truck per day based on the public works record of 24,099 conventional stops collected each week using 20 vehicles.

The American Public Works Association (APWA) reports that the national average for public-sector trash collection is 600 stops per day. The APWA found no difference in productivity between two and three person crews. The APWA reports the private-sector average number of stops per day at 700.

Based on our observation of the Dover sanitation crews, the team feels that the Dover sanitation crews are working diligently but not efficiently. The team feels the daily number of stops could be increased with the following improvements in the management of the collection routine.

The team learned that the conversion to the robo cans in the various neighborhoods has generally gone smoothly. The sanitation staff handled transition issues with an eye toward making the new system convenient to the public. One difficulty that apparently is recurring is the regular need to divert a rear-loading truck into a robo area to collect bulky trash items from some households. This difficulty is rooted in the unwillingness of the township to restrict bulky trash pickups to scheduled dates. Traditionally, a resident with an item of furniture to dispose of simply puts it out with the household garbage, and a rear-loading truck crew would load it in the truck. The robo cans do not accommodate bulky trash. Accordingly, residents have placed bulky items out next to the robo can, necessitating both a rear-loading and robo truck to stop.

Many towns limit the time residents can place bulky waste at the curb for pick up. The team is familiar with many towns that restrict bulky waste to a predetermined bi-monthly schedule. With such a schedule, the sanitation staff can adequately plan its collection routes for both regular and bulky waste.

The sanitation staff recorded the number of extra stops made on robo routes. The record for the first five months of 1998 shows 5,366 extra stops. Annualized, this equals 12,878 extra stops. At the Dover average of 241 stops per day for rear-loading trucks, we calculate that the equivalent of one truck and crew spends 53 days per year on extra pickups in robo areas. Due to the nature of the extra pickup (being widely dispersed and requiring a lot of travel between stops, we believe the actual time spent is significantly higher. This effort will intensify as the robo areas expand.

Were the township to prescribe when a resident could dispose of bulky waste, the unproductive time moving between stops would be greatly reduced. Were the productivity measured in daily stops increased to just 430, one truck and crew would be able to accomplish the bulky waste collection in 30 workdays per year, the equivalent of one week every other month. The township

could save a three-person trash crew (driver and two laborers) for 23 days. We anticipate that productivity will also increase for the normal rear-loading routes, because the truck that is now diverted for the extra collection will spend less time driving between stops.

Recommendation:

We recommend establishing a bulky trash collection schedule providing for collection once every other month, and enforcing compliance with said schedule.

Cost Savings: \$8,441

A number of those interviewed expressed the view that trash crews were redirected to an already completed portion of their route on a daily basis to pick up garbage which was reported “missed.”

Those interviewed asserted that it was improbable that the crew would have missed trash placed at the curb, even if it was in an obscure location. More likely, the resident had put the trash out late. The sanitation staff reports in one case in September, 1998, one resident reported a missed pickup three weeks in a row. Less frequently, residents call admitting they did not get the trash out in time, or call for a special pickup due an unusual circumstance.

The sanitation staff reports management has traditionally expected the staff to return to the address and collect the trash. In each of these cases, a supervisor goes to the address. If the trash is bagged, the supervisor will collect the trash using his pickup truck. In cases where the trash is loose in a container, the supervisors carry bags, and will attempt to empty the trash into a bag and remove it. Where there is a lot of trash or the trash is loose in a robo can, the supervisor summons the appropriate truck to the address. On a typical day, six homes require off-route collections. We estimate that even modest travel distances require each of these stops to take 15 minutes, or 1½ hours per day.

The staff reports that in the past, public works management has made attempts to limit the responsiveness to these reported missed stops by scheduling them for a day or two later. The elected and appointed officials have apparently rebuffed these attempts to reschedule collections, as the resident is typically able to have the department decision reversed by contacting elected and appointed officials at town hall. This has frustrated the public works staff's attempts to enforce the trash ordinance. Accordingly, the staff does very little enforcement.

This informal policy of accommodating each trash problem on demand is inefficient. Few other towns or private concerns will return to a route after it was completed. The team's experience is that one is often expected to simply store the trash until the next collection the following week or transport it to a central collection point, such as the public works yard. The team can understand the desire to accommodate a citizen who has a unusual circumstance, yet citizens have an obligation to routinely prepare their trash and have it at the curb as required in the code. On-demand service is not what the taxpayer is paying for. We feel that storing one's trash or having to drive it to the public works yard is a reasonable requirement for those missing their collection. If enforced, it will surely reduce the frequency of repeat calls. We conservatively estimate savings, assuming only one supervisor responds to these extra collections.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township committee and the public works staff work together to establish, publicize, and enforce a policy of not returning to a trash route once completed.

Cost Savings: \$10,125

The township collects trash from many larger facilities using dumpsters. It appears that most, if not all, of the dumpster locations could be converted to robo collection using a 300-gallon container offered by the manufacturer of the 90-gallon containers now used by the township.

Recommendation:

We recommend the dumpster routes be evaluated for conversion to the robo collection to increase efficiency.

Twice Per Week Collection

From June 15 through September 15 each year, the sanitation division switches to twice-per-week collection. The recycling division schedule does not change. During the team's field work in Dover, we noted that the transition to the summer schedule occupied an inordinate amount of staff time in the public works department, both in fielding phone calls and in preparing informational material. This appeared to be largely due to the need to change the collection day for large areas of town. Additionally, we found the second collection was sparsely used, resulting in the sanitation trucks driving the routes for far fewer collections than during the winter schedule. We estimate the twice-per-week collection schedule is costing the township an additional \$110,000 per year based on the need to schedule Saturday overtime operations for this 10-week period. In addition, the township is bearing the cost of additional fuel use.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the sanitation routes that remain as conventional routes be converted to two-person trucks like the recycling trucks. We estimate that when the mainland portions of the township are fully automated, five rear-loading crews will be required. Accordingly, we compute the savings conservatively reducing the laborer positions by five, rather than one for each of the 20 rear-loading trucks now in use. The township will realize an additional saving in labor expense as it replaces the conventional trucks with automated trucks. We used an entry level laborer fully-loaded wage of \$31,360.

Cost Savings: \$156,800

During interviews, the team learned that at times truck drivers were in short supply due to vacations or illness. At times, this resulted in a crew being idle until supervisors could reassign a driver from another division to the sanitation division. The team inquired why the supervisor could not simply use a laborer who had his commercial driver license. The department management stated that restrictive provisions in the labor contract made the practice prohibitive

as it could lead to an automatic promotion after a period of time. The team was not able to find such a provision in the labor agreement. Upon inquiry to a union steward, the team was told that no such restriction existed. The contract did require that when a laborer worked as a driver, the township credit his time as a driver to his working test period in the event the laborer was promoted.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township use qualified laborers as substitute drivers to ensure that all available equipment and crews are fully utilized.

During FY98, the township expended \$3,026,846 including wages, benefits, and other expenses for the collection and hauling of refuse. This figure does not include the cost of disposal at the landfill, commonly called the tipping fee. Per ton, the cost computes to \$68.09. These compare with private sector collection costs of \$53 to \$55 per ton.

General Operation

The team observed the trash collection operation on several occasions. We found the drivers and crews reported and were ready to work at 7:00 a.m. The trucks were checked and left the public works yard by 7:15 a.m., unless minor maintenance work was required. The sanitation fleet consists of six 27-cubic yard robo trucks and twenty-six 25 cu. yd. conventional rear-loading trucks. Reportedly, the division uses 18 to 20 of these trucks on a daily basis. Partly this is due to trucks being repaired, and at times due to staff absences preventing the division from fully manning the trucks available.

According to the records of the Ocean County Landfill, the township collected 44,450 tons of refuse in 1997. The township reports 46,800 tons collected in 1998.

When the truck was full (typically once per day) the entire crew traveled to the Ocean County Landfill in Manchester Township to empty the truck, and return to the route. Our observations at the landfill showed the gate-to-gate turn-around time to be between 20 to 30 minutes. Travel time to the landfill varied widely from 15 minutes to 45 minutes based on where the truck was working.

Break times occurred in both the morning and afternoon, and generally appeared to conform to the terms of the labor agreement. The crews take their 30-minute lunch period off-route, but generally nearby. During the twice-per-week collection period, part of the Saturday routine included ensuring that all rear-loading trucks were emptied in preparation for the heavy Monday collection on the island.

Landfill records show that typically trucks emptied their loads once per day. The NJDEP estimates that household refuse compacted in a trash truck will weigh one ton for every three cubic yards of refuse. Accordingly, a full 25-yard truck will contain approximately 8.3 tons of material. A 27-yard truck will contain approximately nine tons.

The team's review of the Dover weight records shows that during 1997, on average each truck tipped 6.33 tons, or 70% of a full robo and 76% of a full traditional. During 1998, we computed the average weight to be 6.67 tons, or 80% of a full robo and 74% of a full traditional truck.

This statistic is important in designing routes and deploying crews and equipment. Private sector trucks generally average over 80% of capacity at the landfill. Light trucks can be a result of poor route design resulting in too few homes per route; rural routes that require unusual travel time between stops; and operational decisions to tip partially full trucks. The team believes that in Dover's case, operational decisions to tip partially loaded trucks so that a truck can start the next day empty, is the predominant reason for the light average load. While the tipping fee is not affected, the township could realize efficiencies by holding trucks with less than 80% loads to begin the next collection day. Partially filled trucks at the end of the day on Friday could be topped off on Saturday, or held to Monday morning. The team reviewed the over weekend scenario with an NJDEP representative. The NJDEP representative stated that storing partially loaded trucks over a weekend would be acceptable to NJDEP.

In addition, the team feels sending the entire three-person crew to the landfill is not efficient. Rather than sending a traditional truck with the entire crew to the landfill, we feel a shuttling system using another truck to keep the crew working would be more efficient. This will be even more important if the township does not implement the recommendation to use two-person truck crews.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the public works staff examine the truck weights for each route to determine if any individual routes consistently result in light trucks. Should just five routes be found to be consistently under 80% of a full truckload, route consolidation should be considered.

We recommend that the township institute truck shuttling for rear-loading trucks, particularly if the township does not change the current three-person crews to two-person crews.

Condominiums

N.J.S.A. 40: 67-23.2 et. seq. mandated that where residential condominium associations were providing certain municipal services to the residents, the municipality is required either to provide the service or reimburse the association. The reimbursement amount is based on what the municipal cost would be to provide the service or what the condo cost is to provide the service, whichever is less. In Dover, as in most municipalities, the most costly service is trash collection. Reports provided to the team document that of the 99 residential and office condominiums, the township reimbursed 45 for solid waste services. One appeared to be a commercial establishment. These condominiums represent over 1,903 dwellings. The other condominiums appear to have their trash collected by the township already. Based on the township's report, it appears that adding new condo units to the existing trash collection routes could be more cost-effective than reimbursing the condo association. Adding an additional crew

(three full-time, with benefits) on an existing truck in order to collect trash from these condominiums would not be cost-effective. The same township report detailed examples of streetlight and snow removal reimbursements that appeared questionable because the services were provided in a parking area rather than a roadway.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township selectively add condominium units to existing trash routes, and not reimburse for those services. We also recommend the township establish the proper road mileage and number of streetlights it will reimburse in each association property.

The township may wish to verify that only residential condominium units receive the benefit of the municipal services.

Recycling

The recycling division collects commingled cans, plastic, glass, paper and cardboard, and large appliances curbside each week from residential properties. The division also is responsible for the collection of leaves seasonally. In addition to curbside collection of recyclable material, the division also operates a convenience center where residents can drop off a variety of waste materials. The convenience center is also used by the recycling division to store material collected curbside until a sufficient quantity has accumulated to load on the township tractor-trailer to haul to the county recycling center. Currently, the township does not collect brush for recycling. Brush placed at the curb is collected with trash. Brush brought to the convenience center is recycled as mulch.

The recycling division has 31 staff members. The 1998 salary and wage expenditures were \$1,734,107. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$2,264,965. Of that amount, \$230,897 or 13% was for overtime. The other expense expenditures were \$116,516, primarily for vehicle maintenance and temporary labor. The township paid approximately \$20,000 to the Easter Seals Society for litter control activities. The total budget was \$1,858,239.

During FY98, Dover expended \$2,361,481 including wages, benefits, and other expenses on collecting and hauling recycling material. Dividing by the 27,075 tons the township handles, the cost computes to \$87.22 per ton. This does not compare favorably with the private sector cost for trash collection of \$53 to \$55 per ton. The team believes the township can make the existing operation more efficient.

At the time of our fieldwork, this division had 17 curbside pickup vehicles, but three were out of service. Two vehicles were permanently out of service and were to be traded in upon the arrival of two new vehicles. The division also operated two pickups as supervisor vehicles, a tractor-trailer vehicle, four 25-yard rack trucks, and two roll-off trucks.

Based on the number of housing units in the township being picked up each week, 14 vehicles and 250 working days per year, we calculate the crew is averaging between 510 and 545 stops per day.

It has become increasingly common in New Jersey for curbside recycling pickup to be once every two weeks rather than once per week as a cost-saving measure. The team believes pickups every other week would work well for Dover to increase efficiency. While the staff time needed to collect recyclable material would be cut in half, we believe that the staff not needed for recycling could be used effectively for bulk collection, leaf collection, and in the roads division. Accordingly, our estimate does not include any reduction in the staff size.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township revise the recycling collection schedule to every other week and use the staff not needed for recycling to properly staff other public works functions.

Productivity Enhancement: \$867,053

The convenience center operates 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays. The division staffs the center with two people when it is open. On Saturday, the weekend operation of the convenience center necessitates a supervisor be on duty as well, although other weekend operations could also necessitate a supervisor's presence.

At the time of our review, one of the staff members at the center was a sanitation driver. He checked the contents of loads and verified the owners' residency. The other staff person was a loader operator, who primarily loaded the tractor-trailer vehicle when it returned. The center also uses roll-off containers for certain material. The containers are pulled as needed. In addition to the items collected curbside, the center accepts waste wood and brush, masonry, tires, batteries, oil, antifreeze, and scrap steel for recycling.

The team's observation of the convenience center indicated that many of the weekday hours were slow as compared to Saturday. Accordingly, it appeared that having a truck driver available at the front gate was frequently not a productive use of his time. The team believes that the center hours could be reduced at least 25% if the center were to close for the least busy times. We believe the township could more efficiently handle the gate control duties with part-time attendants, rather than a full-time truck driver, leaving the truck driver available for more useful duties.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township analyze the customer activity at the convenience center and reduce the hours it is open accordingly.

The recycling bonus grant application shows 27,075 tons of recyclables handled by the township in 1997, including that processed through the recycling drop-off convenience center. Of this

amount, 17,154 tons are picked up curbside by the township. Overall, the residents and businesses in Dover recycled 116,187 tons of material in 1997. This higher figure reflects material collected by others from commercial establishments, and not handled by the township. In 1996, (the most recent year available from Ocean County Office of Solid Waste) the Dover recycling rate was 56.5%, which compares favorably to the county average of 52.5%. Many of those interviewed who were familiar with the recycling operation felt that the township could further improve the rate of recycling with an effective public education effort. Condominiums not currently participating in the township-recycling program would probably generate significant new volume.

SUMMER COLLECTION

Staffing and scheduling the summer collection in the beach communities is a particularly complex task for the sanitation and recycling divisions. It does not lend itself to automated trash containers in all areas. This is due to the cost of providing containers to part-year residents as well as the impracticality of occasional off-season occupants leaving trash out for collection, but not being around to retrieve the container from the street. We believe that some neighborhoods on the island may work with robo collection; however, there may not be enough homes in those areas to compose a discrete route, particularly in the winter. During the summer, robo collection would likely become difficult in areas where the route is not completed before the on-street parking intensifies. One-way and dead-end streets complicate things further. Accordingly, we accept the assertion of the public works staff that robo collection on the island is impractical. Assuming the entire township, other than the island, is automated except for bulky trash, the beach collection will become an increasingly unique operation with enormous seasonal activity variations. The township has scheduled trash and recycling collection every Monday for all beach neighborhoods. Currently, during the summer, the Ortley Beach area (south of Lavallette) requires seven rear-loading trucks. The neighborhoods north of Lavallette require eight. During the winter, these same areas require three and four trucks respectively. Accordingly, unless the township modifies the beach community's collection routine, the township will need to retain 15 rear-loading trash trucks to collect summer trash on the island, even when the balance of the township is automated.

Collecting trash in the beach neighborhoods over two days (Monday and Tuesday) year-round will reduce the minimum number of trucks needed from seven to four. During the summer months, the township should operate the same routes on two shifts using seasonal labor. The first shift should begin at 5:00 a.m. This will allow for additional landfill trips, and allow the division to handle the summer peak collection with the same four rear-loaders. During the off-season, the township could avoid Monday holiday overtime by shifting the entire collection to Tuesday after holidays.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township plan to modify the beach community collection schedule in anticipation of reducing the rear-loading truck fleet to six trucks (four required and two in reserve for breakdowns and for leaf collection).

The team anticipates splitting the recycling beach collection schedule to be consistent with the sanitation schedule will not cause any difficulties and will preserve the benefit of removal one-day per week in a neighborhood. Every other week collection for recycling in the beach neighborhood may take an additional measure of public education because of the high turnover of the residential population.

TRANSFER STATION

Over the past several years, the township has proposed building a transfer facility at the public works yard. This facility would allow township trash and recycling trucks to tip their loads at the public works yard and return to their routes. The refuse would then be loaded into 100 cubic yard semi-trailers. The trailer would then deliver the trash (not compacted) to the landfill.

The township currently uses the privately-owned and operated Ocean County Landfill. Township officials have noted that the township would realize operational savings primarily from reducing the unproductive time for three-person trash crews traveling to the landfill and waiting in line at the scale. The township projects additional savings from being able to buy less expensive trucks, because heavy duty transmissions would no longer be required for the off-road driving required at the landfill tipping area. Additionally, a transfer facility would provide the township the opportunity to transport trash to a more distant facility in the event Ocean County Landfill closes or becomes uneconomical.

Yezzi Associates Architects, prepared a report dated June 15, 1997 to amend the county solid waste plan to include the proposed transfer station. The report estimated the capital cost at \$932,000 and an operating cost of \$187,785.

County officials and their consultants reviewed the proposal. While the county did consent to amend the solid waste plan to accommodate the proposed transfer station, they noted that such facilities were generally not considered economical unless sited over 30 miles from the destination. The public works site is approximately seven miles from the Ocean County Landfill.

The county consulting engineer expressed concerns that the township over-estimated operational savings, could partially achieve the operational savings without the new facility, and under-estimated the capital costs.

In our review, a significant factor in the economics of the proposal is the cost of the existing operation. The architect's estimate of current costs is based on the use of 20 rear-loading trash trucks traveling to the landfill with a three-person crew, and waiting between 30 to 90 minutes at the landfill. Noting the township commitment to continuing the automation of the garbage collection using “robo” trucks with a one-person crew, LGBR expects the staff hours spent in transit will become increasingly lower as the township phases in the “robo” trucks.

The team visited the Ocean County Landfill on several occasions at various times of day during June and July. We also spoke to the landfill manager and scale operators on two occasions. During all of these visits, lines at the scales did not exceed four minutes in either direction. The

scale operators report that while the lines can be longer at times, we were seeing typical days. During our fieldwork, long delays at the landfill were reported one day because of a fatal accident at the facility. The manager stated that when the landfill scales were located at a different entry to the landfill site, the delays were much longer. The manager credited the new scale configuration with eliminating the delays. We conclude that the waiting time used in the report is no longer valid.

The manager also reports that the landfill life expectancy extends to 2015. We note that the solid waste industry, previously regulated, is now market-driven. The rates at the Ocean County Landfill are currently competitive and we anticipate market forces will act to keep them competitive. Accordingly, we do not see the need for long distance hauling in the near future. If long distance hauling becomes necessary, we believe that it will be a county-wide problem requiring a county-wide remedy and should be planned as such. Assuming a facility is needed, designing and locating a facility for truck transportation when both rail and water transportation is readily available appears short-sighted.

The county's consultant commented that the construction cost estimates were too low. According to the Yezzi report, the actual construction cost estimates for this 8,750-sq. ft. building were \$71.50 (Yezzi) and \$80 (Killiam). While these differed by only 10%, significant differences exist in the estimated cost of engineering and permitting and the cost of an air handling system. We anticipate the more expensive air handling will be required due to the dusty and odious nature of trash transfer operations. We understand that NJDEP has already requested engineering revisions, which we believe will ultimately result in costs approximating the Killiam estimate for engineering.

NJDEP estimates that construction cost for a recently approved transfer station, including all site improvements, is between \$85 and \$100 per sq. ft. The township's consultant responded to the comment asserting that the township would have needed to construct a storage building anyway for unheated overnight vehicle storage.

Additionally, the Yezzi report suggests that the same building could be used for vehicle washing when not being used for storage or trash transfer. The public works staff reports that all vehicles are currently stored either indoors or under shelter in cold weather. In addition, the size of the proposed building, and the probability of having stored trash and the loading equipment in the building will effectively preclude this area from use for either storage or vehicle washing.

We adjusted the current operational costs estimated in the Yezzi report to reflect a 30-minute turn-around time for 20 daily trips to the Ocean County Landfill. We assumed a driver-only truck at \$32 per hour (a senior driver with benefits), plus truck operating costs of \$40,040 (as estimated in the report). We computed the existing operating cost is approximately \$149,864 rather than the \$457,761 estimated in the report. (The Yezzi report estimate was revised downward to \$344,801 in handwriting in the copy of the report lent to the team.) The result is that the operational savings attributed to the proposed facility changes into a net cost of \$37,921. NJDEP staff informed the team that the probable permit fees would be \$35,000 rather than the \$100,000 estimated by Yezzi.

Revising the construction cost from the \$71.50 to \$80.00 per sq. ft. and using more realistic estimates for air handling, engineering, permits, and other costs, we find the annual proposed debt service for 20 years would increase \$27,416 to \$449,801. The estimated yearly savings of \$74,797 projected in the Yezzi report become a net annual cost of \$299,937.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township stop work on the proposed transfer facility. We encourage the township officials to work cooperatively with the county solid waste officials to plan for a regional facility to be built at a more appropriate time. Such a facility may better serve the region if it was designed to take advantage of inexpensive rail or water transportation available in the area.

Potential Cost Savings: \$932,000 capital, \$187,785 annual operating

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

Dover Township divides vehicle maintenance between the public works department, the police department and the recreation department. Each of these departments has repair shops and mechanics.

The public works shop is the largest facility and employs one foreman, six full-time mechanics and helpers and one mechanic who is shared with the police shop. This division is responsible for all the maintenance of the public works sanitation and road division trucks, ambulances, and some town hall vehicles. This division's salary and wage budget is included in the roads division budget, except for overtime. The department charges overtime to the division benefiting from the overtime. Parts and supplies are budgeted in each division's budget. Accordingly, tires, parts, oil, and other expenses used by the sanitation division are charged to the sanitation budget, and so forth.

During FY98, the regular salaries and wages were \$321,257, including overtime of \$51,893. The fully-loaded personnel costs were \$559,549. The other expenses were approximately \$263,700. The other expenses relating to vehicle repairs were budgeted in the departments responsible for the vehicle. Accordingly, we may not have identified all the relevant expenses. We estimate the total expenses for vehicle maintenance at \$823,249. The department services approximately 157 vehicles at this facility, mostly heavy trucks and other equipment. The facility also services a variety of smaller power equipment as well. The per-vehicle repair costs are \$5,243. This compares unfavorably with costs per-vehicle at contractor operated repair facilities.

Contracts with which the team is familiar have per-vehicle costs ranging from \$2,700 - \$3,000, with the higher costs relating to heavy trucks and equipment. Several factors can lead to higher per-vehicle costs. The complexity of the repairs being done greatly affect personnel costs and productivity. Additionally, older equipment will result in more repairs in addition to the expected maintenance costs.

Contract operators have established per-vehicle cost-per-year thresholds which, when exceeded, prompt the retirement of a vehicle. Currently, the vehicle records at each of the shops are limited and not automated. Accordingly, one can learn of a vehicle's parts and repair history only after a lengthy review of the vehicle file. The department records do not track labor costs associated with a repair.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township properly track and review vehicle repair costs at each of the shops.

The team obtained a copy of a September, 1996 report prepared by vehicle maintenance consultants regarding the operation of the various vehicle shops. The team was surprised to learn that while the staff members at the various shops were aware that the report existed, none had seen it. Those interviewed at the various facilities reported that when they had requested the report from the administrator's office, they were told it was not to be made available to them. The team finds the intentional embargo on information is counter-productive.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township administration immediately share the vehicle maintenance consultants' report with the supervisors at each shop, and affirmatively assist those supervisors implement the recommendations deemed worthwhile.

One of the concerns noted by the consultant was the decision to handle major repairs in-house. While it is a point of pride to the mechanics that they have the skills and capabilities to accomplish nearly any repair, it may be a less efficient use of their time. We believe that more efficiently using the staff time by contracting out selected repairs would improve the cost-per-vehicle. Commonly, efficient private sector shops contract out internal engine repairs, transmission repairs, differential repairs and bodywork.

Recommendation:

We recommend the public works management establish a protocol regarding which repairs they will do in-house and which they will contract out.

The shop supervisor reported that purchasing parts for repairs delayed repairs at times. He believed the problems were due to insufficient funds. Delays in purchasing were reported in several departments. Purchasing issues are discussed further in the purchasing section of this report.

The shop supervisor and others interviewed, stated the greatest need is for preventative maintenance, but this has been hampered by constraints on the number of mechanics and the volume of repair work. Reportedly, virtually no preventative maintenance occurs. The shop supervisor reported the mechanics perform routine maintenance, such as an oil change, when the

vehicle is in the shop for another repair. This is in part due to the need to use the vehicles at the same time the mechanics are at work, and the fact that the mechanics are occupied with repair work. At the time of our fieldwork, several trash trucks were out of service for repair.

Township policy prohibits anyone from repairing private vehicles at any of the facilities. The team did not ever see private vehicles in the repair bays. All those interviewed were aware of the policy.

We commend the township for this business-like policy, and the managers of each respective department for enforcing the policy.

Police have two and one-half mechanics working just on police vehicles. These mechanics also operate a tow truck owned by the township. The regular salary and wages for this division were \$92,282. The division also paid \$4,582 in overtime wages, nearly all to the chief mechanic. The other expenditures were \$102,680. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$147,984.

The police fleet consists of 91 vehicles, primarily automobiles. We compute the cost-per-vehicle to be \$2,755. This cost compares favorably to private sector costs-per-vehicle.

The private consultant recommended bringing police mechanics and vehicles into the public works facility for repair and maintenance. The consultant also recommended bringing parks and recreation vehicles other than golf carts and turf equipment to public works.

We believe that the township could realize some operational efficiency by combining the management of the police and public works vehicle maintenance operations. Combining the operations would allow the elimination of one supervisory position, saving \$70,259. We feel that the combined staff would allow for the reestablishment of a second shift for maintenance on vehicles during non-work hours. A second shift would require at least two mechanics. Should the township accept the recommendation made in the parking authority section of this report to consolidate the parking authority operations into the township, the township could provide one of these mechanics from the parking authority budget. We feel one of the current mechanic positions could be moved to a second shift if the police garage is consolidated with the public works garage. Accordingly, the proposed consolidation is more fully discussed in the parking authority section of this report. We believe that the township will also see benefits from extended vehicle life and a reduction in vehicle downtime. We have not attempted to quantify these additional benefits.

Recommendation:

Consolidate the supervision of the police and public works vehicle maintenance operations.

Cost Savings: \$70,259

Parts Room

The public works garage contains a parts room operated by one parts room clerk. The parts room clerk orders and receives all vehicle parts as well as fuel for the fuel facility. He is also responsible for some radio dispatch functions, primarily logging when the various crews log out for breaks. The need to relay messages is limited as nearly everyone in the department has a radio available.

The receiving functions include branding tires and generally securing the inventory in cages. The shop has a computerized inventory system that is used to track the receipt and disbursement of parts. While mechanics have access to the parts room when the clerk is away, it appears that they are diligent about reporting what parts are used. Those interviewed stated the system could compute labor costs for each repair. The system has apparently only been used to keep track of the cost of parts. Separately, the public works coordinator is keeping a spreadsheet to track repair time. We understand that this spreadsheet is not used to compute labor costs.

Other than identifying obsolete parts, the township staff has not conducted a physical inventory to verify the computer system records.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the capabilities of the computerized inventory system be utilized to compute repair costs for each vehicle for use by public works management in determining when vehicles exceed their economic usefulness.

We recommend that the township combine the public works dispatch functions with the non-emergency dispatch functions proposed in the fire prevention section of this report.

The mechanics run the parts operation at the police department without the aid of an inventory system. Vehicle records consist of keeping a file for each vehicle with a repair record, and parts used. The staff does not keep a record of repair time or labor cost. The mechanics order parts and each mechanic has access to the parts room.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the parts inventory at all garages be reconciled with a physical inventory and labor costs tracked for each vehicle.

Fuel Purchasing

The township purchases 227,338 gallons of 89-octane gasoline and 229,522 gallons of diesel fuel for the various vehicles using the fuel facility. We did not find any vehicles in the township fleet that required an 89-octane fuel. The purchasing agent reported she had inquired about the need to purchase of the higher-octane fuel. She was told the school district required it for its vehicles. The school maintenance supervisor felt it would improve vehicle performance. The team is unsure of the requirements of the school fleet; however, we understand that the school district

buys fuel from both the township and a private vendor. Accordingly, it appears that the township could be buying 87-octane fuel. The district can fuel any vehicles that require higher-octane fuel at its commercial supplier.

The township purchasing office reports that the combined gasoline purchases for the township public works, police and golf utility was 227,338 gallons in fiscal year 1998. The August 4, 1998 Journal of Commerce reports the difference in price between regular unleaded (87-octane) and mid-grade unleaded (89-octane) was \$.0235 per gallon. We compute the savings for buying regular gasoline to be \$5,342.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township buy 87-octane unleaded gasoline, rather than buying 89-octane.

Cost Savings: \$5,342

Traffic Signals

Those interviewed in the public works department report that all signals in the township are the responsibility of either the county or state. When signals are out of service the police and fire police handle traffic control as needed.

Sign Shop

The sign shop division of the public works department repairs and replaces various signs owned by the township. While they do create signs for non-regulatory purposes, such as directional and place name signs, their primary function is regulatory signs and street name signs for traffic control.

The division has two full-time employees, a senior traffic maintenance worker and a truck driver. They are assigned one utility body vehicle, and work in a room off the vehicle shop.

The 1998 salary expenses were \$41,998 for one full-time employee for a full year, and one full-time employee since approximately April, 1998. The annualized fully-loaded wage costs for the two people assigned to this division were \$114,119. Dividing by a 2,080 hour work year, the per person hourly rate with benefits in this division is \$27.43. The other expenses for 1998 were \$10,914.

This shop had been a one-person operation for the previous three years. Public works management explained that the second person was to assist the existing person, and to ensure trained backup personnel would be available when needed. When this shop was staffed by one person, sign replacement was handled by one person, but was more cumbersome.

The team appreciates the need to have adequate cross-training to assure that important functions are carried out during vacations, illnesses, and when retirements occur. We believe that the helper position as described to us would be appropriately classified as a laborer's position.

The workspace is orderly, and includes a computerized lettering machine and sign oven. The shop maintained a stock of common signs, and makes others as needed.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the “helper” position be reclassified as a laborer position rather than a truck driver position. The base salary for a laborer is \$31,193. The base salary for a truck driver is \$33,119.

Cost Savings: \$1,926

According to the shop supervisor, this division replaces 250 to 300 signs per year. In addition, this division paints stop bars and does limited centerline stripping using paint or reflective tape as warranted by the traffic volume at an intersection. The supervisor had a DOT traffic sign manual in the shop and appeared well-versed in the regulatory requirements for traffic safety.

The budget report indicates the township bought 150 stop signs and 250 other common signs such as 25-mph speed limit signs and handicap parking signs from Garden State Highway Products, the cooperative purchasing vendor. A 30x30 inch stop sign cost \$18.67 and a 24x30 inch speed limit sign cost \$15.96. The township also purchased 150 30x30-inch stop sign faces at \$13.20 each. The shop staff explained that they purchased new complete signs in addition to the sign faces to replace those damaged beyond repair and for new locations.

The shop supervisor estimated it takes one person 10 minutes to clean and reface a stop sign. We calculate the labor cost is about \$5.00 per sign. Accordingly, each refaced stop sign is costing \$18.20. This compares favorably with the cost from the contract supplier. This estimate does not include the cost of indirect overhead such as the cost of space in the DPW facility or the cost of vehicles. We assume the space and vehicles would be required for sign storage and the vehicles required for installations. We also omitted other indirect overhead, such as the cost of the sign-making equipment, as we feel the equipment is substantially depreciated. Importantly, while the comparison of stop signs shows it is cost neutral to buy or reface, the sign shop gives the public works department the capabilities to do all regulatory signs, and nearly any custom sign in-house. These signs can often be much more expensive when not ordered in quantity.

We commend the township public works department for a cost-efficient sign shop.

The division has no written sign replacement schedule or policy. The shop supervisor has an informal replacement program. He keeps his daily work records and uses them to determine the age of signs in a neighborhood. As he notices signs becoming faded, he checks the records to note the age of the signs, and if any warrantee claims are possible. Thereafter, the signs are scheduled for replacement when time permits. Installation of non-emergency jobs is usually within two to three days. During 1998, the supervisor planned to replace faded and weathered stop signs in the beach communities. During our review, the team received comments that the quality of signs produced by the State Department of Corrections was of inferior quality. The sign shop supervisor demonstrated on a faded stop sign that was represented to be a State Use

Industry sign that he was able to rub off the remaining color on the sign simply using a household cleaner. We note the need for the Department of Corrections to improve the product quality in the section on statutory/regulatory reform.

The sign shop staff responds to accident-related problems about five times per week, 260 signs per year. We are told a typical accident response involves two people for 30 to 45 minutes. Virtually every accident involving a sign requires replacing the signpost. About 60% of these accidents require a replacement sign as well. We compute the cost of a sign installation to be \$27.43 assuming two employees for ½ hour @ \$27.43/hr. each, plus cost of the sign. The sign cost is \$18.67 for a new 30" stop sign. Each signpost costs approximately \$15. Thus, a replacement sign and post, installed, costs \$60.63. Currently accident reports are completed by the police and if damage to municipal property is involved a copy is sent to the public works department and a copy to the department of administration. The team was not able to identify any person responsible for filing claims against auto insurers, and did not identify any income from auto insurers for non-auto property damage.

Various staff members recalled anecdotal cases where claims were made by various departments for damaged property, but these were occasional events. We were told that the department with the loss is expected by township management to assert the claim, yet the operating departments are unaware of this requirement and appear uncertain how to assert a claim.

Based on 260 accidents requiring only post replacement, the township is foregoing \$11,031 in reimbursements. Assuming 156 of those accidents require replacing a sign at the same cost as a stop sign, another \$2,912 should be reimbursed.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township assert claims against auto insurers for the cost of all damage to public property involved in an accident.

Revenue Enhancement: \$13,943

Dover signs suffer a lot of vandalism; staff estimates at least 100 stop signs vandalized each year. Overall, the supervisor estimates that between 40% and 50% of sign replacements are due to vandal damage and theft. Vandalism requires the sign be refaced at a minimum, and often replaced because the sign is stolen, shot through with pellet holes, or otherwise damaged beyond reuse.

Based on the time and material needed to replace 100 stop signs we calculate sign vandalism is costing Dover Township approximately \$4,800 per year. Where sign vandalism has been recurring, the DPW staff has contacted the police for assistance. While results are not always evident, we find the cooperation between the two departments valuable, and encourage more cooperation on sign vandalism.

At times, the township has recovered stolen signs. It was not clear from our interviews if restitution was ordered in any subsequent court proceedings.

We commend the cooperation between the police and DPW staff regarding sign vandalism, and encourage it to continue.

The sign shop supervisor reported that in accordance with a department policy, signs are not produced for non-municipal organizations, even on a fee basis. While the team feels this is a good policy because it limits the potential for abuse by the many civic groups, we feel it may warrant some modification for other municipal organizations such as the parking authority. Parking authority cost for a 30” stop sign purchased at a commercial establishment was \$41.20. Part of the cost difference may be that the parking authority ordered a higher grade and more expensive face material. It is not clear from the invoice.

We feel the township will gain some efficiencies and income by making the sign shop available for traffic safety sign work for other public agencies in Dover.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township make the public works sign shop available to sell signs to other public agencies, such as the parking authority or schools.

During interviews, we learned that developers have not always been diligent in installing the correct signage along new roads. While the development streets are privately-owned the township has very little authority over what signs are installed for traffic control. Once the township accepts a new road, the signage must conform to the standards of the NJ Department of Transportation.

When made aware of an impending acceptance, the sign shop supervisor has reviewed the signage, and asked the engineering department to have the developer correct the shortcomings before the acceptance. Unfortunately, the advice of the sign shop staff is not always solicited. During the past several years the sign shop staff has expended varying amounts of money to correct the signage accepted with the new road. The supervisor estimated that one 10 -15 lot subdivision with signage that conforms to the DOT standard better than most developments, may cost approximately \$1,000 to bring into compliance with the DOT regulations.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the sign shop supervisor be included on a final inspection notification before acceptance of any street, and that the developer be required to install all signage necessary to achieve DOT approval.

Cost Savings: \$1,000 - \$2,000 per sub-division

ROADS

The roads division has five laborers, 11 truck drivers, 10 equipment operators and two supervisors. At the time of our review, two laborer vacancies existed. The division appears to be the division cannibalized when other divisions are short-handed. Sanitation is typically the

division needing help. This division has four sweepers, and 15 dump trucks, one pipe truck, two hot patch trucks and one vactor truck use for cleaning catch basins. The roads division is involved in seemingly diverse activities because the township has assigned all the heavy equipment operators to this division. Accordingly, this division becomes involved in every project requiring an operator.

In 1998, the division expended \$1,668,624 in salaries and wages, including approximately \$170,208 in overtime. The other expenses were \$211,547. We computed the fully-loaded wage costs to be \$2,539,641. The wage cost of this division is somewhat overstated as this division budget includes the wages for the department managers and most of the clerical and bookkeeping staff. The other expenditures do not include \$90,491 reserved at the end of the fiscal year.

We reviewed each of the roads division operations separately.

During the 12 weeks the team was there, 15 dump trucks were stored in a garage. The trucks were not used during the period of our review. When those interviewed were asked why this equipment was not used, responses ranged from “insufficient staff” to “the trucks were primarily snow removal vehicles.” These trucks varied in age and condition; however, all were at least in good condition, and ready for service.

While reviewing the golf course utility, the team noted that the dump truck being used by the utility was in particularly poor condition.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township assign one of these unused trucks to the golf utility.

We recommend that the township refrain from purchasing any new dump trucks until the staff evaluates its need for these trucks.

Some interviewed expressed the view that the work orders given to this division were regularly rearranged based on the latest concern of the elected officials. The team observed on one occasion, a public works manager giving a supervisor notes from a phone call requesting attention to some routine issues regarding drainage or pavement repairs. It appeared to be understood that the supervisor needed to rearrange the schedule to attend to these problems ahead of problems the supervisor felt were more pressing. We believe that the public works managers need to filter requests in a manner that allows the elected officials to make requests, and yet allow for the orderly scheduling of non-emergency work.

Similar to the other divisions of public works, the roads division has two supervisors. We feel one supervisor and one assistant would provide adequate supervision during absences. We computed cost savings at 10% of the supervisor’s salary.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township reclassify one road supervisor as an assistant supervisor.

Cost Savings: \$6,000

Street Sweeping

Street sweeping is a daily activity for the division. According to the director, two sweepers were out every day during our field visit. Two additional sweepers would normally be out as well; however, management reassigned the operators to other tasks, most notably the leaf composting yard. The staff reports that elected officials had “guaranteed” the beach community that they would be swept three times during the summer season. We understand the township created this schedule in response to requests from residents of the area. In addition, the township provides weekly sweeping in the downtown Toms River area. This particular operation results in an operator reporting at 3:00 a.m., so the sweeper is not hampered by parked autos. All other streets are scheduled to be swept twice per year; however, those interviewed had inconsistent estimates of frequency. Our observation of the streets in the community showed the curbs and gutters to be generally clean.

The township does not track costs related specifically to street sweeping separately from the roads division budget; accordingly, the team estimated the costs. We computed the fully-loaded wage cost for four class b operators to be \$257,900 per year. We estimate the annual maintenance cost, including replacement brooms, for each of the four sweepers to be \$3,500. Each sweeper cost approximately \$115,000 new. Accordingly, we estimate the annual debt service based on a five-year useful life at 5% interest to be \$18,530 annually for each machine. The total annual cost is approximately \$346,020. Those interviewed in the public works and engineering departments did not know municipal road mileage. Most offered estimates at about 600 miles. Sweeper operators did not record their daily mileage. Indeed, one sweeper’s odometer was broken.

Cost per road mile of \$247.15 (\$123.57 per curb mile) were calculated by dividing the \$319,900 cost by an estimated 1,400 miles of municipal roadway swept. We computed the mileage at 600 miles swept twice per year and added 200 miles for the third sweep in the beach community and the downtown sweeping. Assuming four sweepers are working each workday, we compute the daily cost to be \$360. Contracted rates with which the team is familiar are \$122.40 per road mile, \$61.20 per curb mile. We understand contracted daily rates for sweeping range from \$500 to \$550. Dover appears to be very competitive based on the daily rate but not on the per mile comparison. We believe this is attributable to the large volume of unproductive time spent traveling to empty the sweeper and return to the route as well as the uncertainty of the road mileage estimates.

Street sweeping is normally prompted by a need for litter control and/or environmental concerns for sand and other debris migrating into storm sewers and local waterways causing blockages and

silting. Sweeping can also provide a measure of traffic safety by removing loose material that may cause a vehicle to slide. It appears that the frequency of sweeping in both the beach community and the downtown area exceeds that required to accomplish these purposes.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township reevaluate its sweeping schedule in the downtown and beach areas.

The township had recently purchased two new sweepers. During our entire field visit, the new sweepers were not used. Upon inquiry, we were told the equipment needed lettering and to have a radio installed. This work was given a low priority in the shop because of the shortage of operators. One new sweeper was also waiting for some warrantee work.

The sweepers experienced a significant amount of travel time due to the size of the township. According to the APWA, sweeper operations can be significantly improved if the sweeper is purchased with a “high dump” capability where the sweeper can dump into a another truck rather on the ground. This would allow the township to position a dump truck or two closer to the sweeping route, and reduce the sweeper’s disposal time. Periodically, a driver would need to be assigned to empty the dump truck. This would provide a tremendous operational efficiency in Dover, because sweepers on the beach currently must travel about one hour round trip to tip their load. According to the APWA, the cost difference between a ground dump and a high dump sweeper is not significant.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township specify a high dump option when future sweepers are purchased.

Operators reported they are directed to dump the sweepings at the leaf compost yard. Owing to the large volume of litter and other debris material mixed in with the sand that is swept up, the team encourages the township to consult with NJDEP regulations concerning acceptable disposal of street sweepings. Our understanding is that sweepings are regulated as solid waste primarily due to the presence of lead and petrochemical residues. A representative of NJDEP noted that acceptable uses would include use in asphalt or concrete production, as cover material at a landfill, and as a road base material. Any of these options would be far more cost-effective than land filling as ordinary waste.

Leaf Collection/Composting

As in many NJ municipalities, the township provides seasonal leaf collection twice each fall and once in the spring. The recycling crews perform the collection using rear-loading sanitation trucks. The township collected approximately 11,000 cubic yards during the fall of 1997 and an additional 4,000 – 5,000 cubic yards in the spring. Estimates for 1998 are somewhat higher due to tree growth and the increase in developed land.

Citizens are expected to place their leaves in bags curbside in accordance with a published deadline to have their leaves picked up. As of 1998, the crew empties the leaves from the bags into the trucks. This simplifies the material handling at the composting yard.

Those who wish to dispose of leaves before or after the scheduled pick up are directed to take the leaves to the recycling center. The township encourages homeowners to compost leaves, and has participated in a program to distribute composting containers to interested citizens.

The roads division operates the leaf composting facility, located behind the ice rink off Oak Ridge Parkway. During the team's field work, the township had one or two operators and one laborer assigned to the leaf yard every day in an effort to correct a long standing mismanagement of collected leaves. The site was the subject of NJDEP enforcement action to obtain the needed corrections. As of the completion of the fieldwork, it appeared that the township was making significant progress in reducing the volume of leaves at the leaf yard.

The NJDEP permit for the Dover facility allows up to 10,000 cubic yards of leaves (as measured upon arrival) to be composted per year on a three acre site. Other permits are available, but would generate engineering and other expenses to satisfy the NJDEP requirements. The public works management staff was evaluating options for the future of the leaf yard operation including disposing all leaves or just the excess leaves with a contractor. The township may wish to consider obtaining a permit for a second compost facility at another site in the township.

During the time of our fieldwork, the township staffed the compost facility with at least two operators and one laborer every workday. The facility was equipped with a front-end loader, a windrow turner, and a material screen. This staffing level was apparently provided by the township to work on the large backlog of collected leaves that caused the DEP enforcement action. Ordinarily, the team would expect to see such a facility staffed occasionally as leaf piles needed turning or were ready for screening.

The team observed the operation over several days. We noted that the crew assembled at the public works center at 7:00 a.m. and traveled together in a pickup truck to the site. Work began around 7:30 a.m. At 9:30 a.m., the entire crew left the site to get coffee. They returned to work 45 minutes later. The crew took lunch at noon for 40 minutes, and an afternoon break for 30 minutes. The crew left the site at 2:35 p.m. to return to the public works center. On another occasion, a laborer was observed sitting in the pickup truck reading a newspaper. When asked why he was sitting in the truck, he reported that he was instructed to count the trucks of screened mulch taken from the site by the contract buyer. The team noted that trucks arrived sporadically during the day. Upon inquiry, we were told that while those things should not be happening, the supervisor in charge of the leaf yard was on an extended medical leave, and that other supervisors were not able to supervise the leaf yard.

The township collected most of the leaves in the stockpile in plastic bags. The bags in the stockpile created great operational difficulties with the equipment used to turn the leaf windrows. The difficulties brought the township to decide to revise its collection routine and burst bagged leaves curbside.

It appears to the team that this facility is one where having the assigned crew report to work at the work site rather than the public works center and “punch in” by radio would increase the productivity significantly. Additionally, having remote crews register their break and lunch times by radio and staggering breaks and lunch would increase the amount of time spent processing leaves significantly.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the public works director require supervisors to review the work practices of their crews. Supervisors should retrain or discipline workers demonstrating a less diligent work effort. Supervisors unwilling to require diligent work efforts should be retrained or removed from a supervisory capacity.

Radio/Electronics Maintenance

The department has a radio maintenance division consisting of two employees. The staff people are responsible to provide mobile radio installations, mobile radio repairs, and at least troubleshoot problems with the base and satellite antenna systems. In addition, they often are assigned to repair the closed circuit video system in the jail.

During our review of the various agencies, we noted that Fire District #1 and the Dover MUA each had employed a radio technician.

Recommendation:

We recommend the various agencies within Dover Township work to obtain radio and other electronic repair cooperatively.

Several of those interviewed expressed frustration regarding the amount of time it was taking to get radios installed in new police vehicles. Upon inquiry to the technicians, we learned that new radio installations were taking about a week for the initial vehicle due to the technician learning where to run wires, and mount radios. Subsequent cars took less time, as little as 1½ days. Private firms install radios in less than one day, for about \$300. Removing a radio and reinstalling in another car added about \$50 to the cost. There are significant differences in the work required for the installation of a radio as opposed to repairing a radio. It appears that the township would be better served having the police vehicles in service and having the technicians available for more routine repairs. The township may wish to consider contracting for electronics maintenance at the time any current employees leave the service of the township.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township contract for the installation of radios in new autos.

Drainage

Storm drainage is an area of responsibility in Dover that is requiring increasing attention. Those interviewed reported that many subdivisions were constructed with corrugated steel storm pipes.

Decades later, these pipes are deteriorating. Many pipes are flooded with salt water during high tide hastening their deterioration. To date, the township has repaired or replaced only minor sections of pipe as needed. A number of storm pipes are located in easements across residential lots that owners have landscaped. While the township's legal responsibility to restore landscaping is limited, construction work in these easements may create a significant public relations difficulty.

Work crews are assigned as needed to respond to sink holes, or blocked catch basins. The management has discussed the need for identifying each of the storm sewers and establishing a schedule for cleaning out sediment and debris with the jet/vactor truck. The supervisor reported that when his crew is available for storm sewer work, they are fully occupied responding to reports of blockages. It is clear that the storm water system will be demanding increasing resources in the future.

DOVER MUA

The Dover MUA was created by an ordinance adopted by the township committee in 1949. The MUA provides sewage collection services to the township. It maintains the various pump stations and sewage collection lines in the municipality, and contracts for sewage treatment with the Ocean County MUA. The MUA bills system users for the services. The MUA is a self-supporting entity and does not rely on taxes for any portion of its operation.

The Dover MUA elected not to participate in the review by LGBR. Accordingly, our comments are based on a limited review of public information and interviews with individuals outside of the MUA. The township committee may choose to conduct a more complete review of the MUA.

In reviewing the public documents available from the Dover MUA, the team noted that the MUA commissioners had elected to provide health benefits to themselves in the same manner as full-time employees. The township committee may wish to suggest these appointed officials discontinue providing health benefits to the authority members or require they reimburse the authority for the cost of the benefits. Assuming five authority members are enrolled in the authority health benefits, we estimate these benefits are costing the authority approximately \$40,000 per year.

The MUA audit shows the MUA has unrestricted retained earnings of \$32,273,242 as of December 31, 1997. This appears to be an extraordinary amount of surplus in comparison to the authority's 1997 annual budget of \$15,850,000. The township committee may wish to review the authority's financial planning to assure itself that the authority reserves are an appropriate size.

RENT LEVELING

The rent leveling board meets monthly. The members are volunteers appointed by the township committee. A part-time secretary staffs the office, located in town hall. The secretary works from 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and attends the monthly meetings.

The rent leveling board contracts for professional services for an attorney and an accountant appointed by the township committee. These professionals also attend the monthly meetings.

After numerous requests for meeting minutes and any written reports by the professional staff, the team obtained copies of the minutes. The board secretary reported that the professional staff does not prepare written reports. During 1998, the board expenditures for legal work were \$11,215. The expenditures for accounting work were \$12,300.

The minutes show that the accountant reports on the accuracy of the computations of the landlords when the landlord requests a rent adjustment. The minutes occasionally report the attorney giving legal and procedural advice.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township discontinue hiring separate legal counsel for the rent leveling board, and instead make the legal responsibilities for this board part of the duties of the township attorney.

Cost Savings: \$11,215

We recommend the township committee discontinue the practice of having the accountant attend the monthly meetings, and only use the services of an accountant when necessary. This would reduce the professional services contract amount. Optimally, the duties performed by the accountant could be handled by members of the finance department's staff for further cost savings.

Cost Savings: \$12,300

LIBRARY

The township does not have a municipal library. The Ocean County Library serves Dover citizens. The library operates its main branch in downtown Toms River. The branch is an attractive, modern facility containing a large collection of books and other media. Many LGBR reports have found library services are far more efficient when provided on a regional basis.

The team commends the township committee for cooperating with the county to provide library services.

COURTS

While the team recognizes the separate authority and responsibility of the judicial branch of government, we make the following comments and recommendations to provide the township with information on current and potential operations, procedures and programs available to the court. We make recommendations with the knowledge that further review and approval by the appropriate personnel is required.

Operations

The team observed a number of court proceedings, toured the facilities, and interviewed essential persons working in or directly associated with the Dover Township Municipal Court.

In 1998, the salary and wage expenditures for the municipal court were \$371,998. Of that, \$11,200 was for overtime. The other expenses totaled \$32,275. The total budget was \$404,273. The fully-loaded personnel costs were \$550,487.

During 1998, the court collected \$2,046,437 in revenue. The township retained \$1,143,000 of this revenue; the court disbursed the balance to state and county agencies.

The court disposed of 24,824 complaints and added 25,242 complaints. There were 20,141 traffic summonses and 5,101 criminal complaints issued during 1998. Of the 20,141 traffic summonses, 14,896 were moving violations; 5,245 were parking.

The judge scheduled court sessions 20 times a month. Including special sessions and DWI sessions, the court had 240 sessions in 1998.

Organization/Staffing

The municipal court currently has a staff of 10 full-time employees, three part-time, and two judges. The full-time staff of the court consists of a court administrator responsible for the overall management of the department, five deputy administrators, and five clerical staff. The part-time staff consists of three part-time clerical staff.

The judges are assigned to handle each court session, and are on call to handle emergent matters that may occur. Normal court sessions are scheduled on Monday mornings (1), Wednesday evenings (2) and Thursdays (2).

The court proceedings start promptly and continue until all cases on the docket are completed. The sessions the team observed were conducted in an orderly and professional manner. The courtroom is quiet and free of disruption and confusion. The municipal court staff is able to accommodate competing demands in a flexible and professional manner.

The township police provide some security during some of the court sessions; however, the team found the security inadequate. On some occasions, no officer was in the room during the court sessions because they were meeting with the prosecutor or performing other duties. Reportedly, there were some occasions where a defendant, upon being found guilty, has left the courtroom

with case documentation and without paying the fine imposed. While this has typically been resolved administratively, improved court security would reduce the opportunity for these and potentially more serious incidents.

Recommendation:

The team recommends that the police provide an officer for all court sessions. The team feels this can be done with minimal impact on the police work schedule if, working with the court administration, the police use officers already scheduled to be in court to provide security. This may include requiring officers called in for court appearances to be in uniform and to work the entire time for which the police called them in. It will also include requiring the officers to coordinate their meetings with the prosecutor so that one remains in the court at all times. Occasionally, it may require having an officer come in off the street during sessions when other officers are not called to appear.

Facilities

The court holds sessions in the public safety building auditorium. The room has a capacity of 140. The docket typically has 150 cases, including ones that the judge may adjourn or dismiss. The court facility appears accessible for the physically handicapped, and large enough to handle the number of persons in attendance at each session.

Case Management

The court receives summonses from a variety of agencies. These include sheriff officers, the NJ State Police (NJSP), the NJSP Marine Division, the NJDEP Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife, fire and building inspectors, welfare investigators, parking enforcement officers and the local police. The court accepts complaints directly from private citizens. Entering complaints, scheduling cases, cashiering, producing failure to appear notices and warrants for arrest are delegated by the court administrator to the staff. The staff appears to be well-trained and cross-trained adequately.

The court was one of the first in the state to receive the Automated Traffic System (ATS) and Automated Criminal System (ACS) from the state Administrative Office of the Courts. The ATS/ACS computers provide elaborate record keeping and case tracking for the municipality and the state judicial system. The staff appears very knowledgeable in the various features and uses of the systems. In addition, the court is cooperating with the parking authority staff in using electronic summonses. This reduces the time spent by court staff keypunching parking tickets.

The current caseload per month per employee is 180 cases. Many factors affect the ability of a court staff to process cases. Foremost is the mix of parking, moving violation, and disorderly person (criminal) cases. Other factors include the training, experience, and diligence of the staff. LGBR has reviewed other well-run municipal courts with monthly per person caseloads of 400. These courts are handling primarily parking violations and other traffic violations. A court with a 12% criminal caseload, 75% moving violations, and few parking violations has a monthly per person caseload of 259. Courts such as Dover's, with larger criminal caseloads (20.5%) and 60%

moving violations will have a lower per person monthly caseload. We conclude that the court's staffing level is appropriate. The 1997 statistical reports show the average case disposal rate was 98.3% indicating that the staff is effectively using the ATS/ACS computer.

The Regional Consortium installing the EZ Pass system on the Garden State Parkway predicts the advent of the EZ Pass system will result in the filing of significant volumes of summonses for toll violators in those municipalities hosting toll facilities. The EZ Pass consultants based these predictions on current estimates of toll violators. If true, the additional volume will affect the Dover Court at least until motorists learn to avoid violations. We believe the township and court should view staffing decisions related to EZ Pass as temporary until the EZ Pass system complaints stabilize.

In many municipalities, evening court sessions result in overtime wages for the staff working those sessions. In Dover, we found that the administrator schedules the court staff to minimize the use of overtime. We found the use of the part-time staff during the evening sessions and the scheduling of a court staff person to process criminal complaints on Friday and Saturday evenings to be particularly effective. We also found the court schedule is effectively coordinated with the police work schedule to minimize police overtime for court appearances.

The team commends the court administrator and the judge for their staff scheduling to control overtime.

The police and court administration have remarkably good cooperation between their departments. This is important to the taxpayer because issues such as the transportation and housing of prisoners, scheduling of police officers for testimony, and processing persons into prison can cause significant overtime and staff frustration if not properly coordinated.

We commend both the police and court administration for their efficient, cooperative management practices.

Time Payments

From time to time defendants are unable to pay the fines assessed in court. In these cases, the judge may allow a defendant to make periodic payments or "time payments." In many courts, time payments become delinquent, requiring aggressive follow-up by the court staff. In reviewing the time payment accounts of the Dover Township Court, we found court personnel are actively pursuing the collection of delinquent accounts. The judge questioned all defendants on the record concerning candidacy for time payments and explained the consequences should the defendant fail to comply with the time payment program.

The team commends the court and court staff on their aggressive efforts to enforce the terms of time payment orders.

Failure-to-Appear Notices

During the period reviewed, the court produced and mailed Failure-to-Appear (FTA) notices promptly after each court session. This is an important feature for both the enforcement of

summonses to appear and for the internal financial controls of the court. On one occasion in June, 1997, the staff did not produce or send out approximately 280 notices in a timely way. The court administrator explained that this happened due to the department's postage budget having been expended before the end of the fiscal year. The court administrator correctly elected not to print the FTAs, rather than storing them until postage was available. Under these circumstances, this provided good internal controls. Failure-to-Appeal notices, like other forms of late notices, are an important feature of an internal control system, and should not be delayed unnecessarily.

Recommendation:

We recommend that postage be made available to the court for time-critical mailings. We recognize that an emergency appropriation very late in the fiscal year may be impractical; however, with reasonable forecasting a budget transfer could avoid the problem.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

The Municipal Public Defenders law, N.J.S.A. 2B:24-1 et. seq., requires each municipality to hire a public defender. Dover has contracted with a law firm to provide this service. The law also provides that the township may charge an application fee for those requesting a public defender. The township is to use the fees to offset the costs incurred by the township in having the public defender. During 1998, the township received \$7,747 in public defender application fees.

In Dover, should a defendant wish to have representation by the public defender, the defendant completes an application and confirms the accuracy of the information provided on the record. In order to insure that the information on the application is accurate, and that public defender representation is not given inappropriately, the court administration has contracted with an investigator at an annual cost \$3,600 to review all applications. The investigator is given approximately 30 cases per month. The court administrator reports investigation has revealed approximately 10 applicants per month are not eligible for representation by the public defender, saving the township the cost of representation. We compute a cost per investigation of \$10.

The team commends the judge and his staff for this cost-effective use of a private investigator as a means of controlling costs while providing the service to those eligible.

The township paid the public defender \$37,000 during the 1998 fiscal year for handling all cases assigned. The public defender does not receive health, sick leave, or vacation benefits. There is no "other expenses" budget for the public defender.

The court staff reports that the public defender appears at nearly every court session, and handles approximately 250 cases per year. The average cost per case is \$148.

Many municipalities have found that retaining a public defender on a per case or per appearance basis is more cost-effective than a salary basis. The team is familiar with public defender professional service contracts where the cost to the municipality computes to approximately \$21 per case.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township committee take proposals for public defender services to assure it is paying a competitive price.

PROSECUTOR

The township committee has appointed a township prosecutor to present municipal complaints to the court. The contract for 1998 cost \$55,000. The prosecutor has no “other expense” budget.

During our observations of the court, the prosecutor was always present, and prepared to proceed.

One of the duties of a prosecutor is to assist with the record management pertaining to the discovery process. Accordingly, when a case involving a Dover police officer goes to trial, the defending attorney requests a copy of the police file concerning the case. Typically, the prosecutor reviews the police file and approves the items the police may release to the defense attorney. The police record bureau makes the copies and mails the documents to the defense attorney.

The township set a \$20 fee from the defense for discovery involving Dover police cases. The team noted that on all cases arising from the NJSP involving discovery, the municipal prosecutor is sent the case file from the state police record bureau, reviews the documents, and responds to the request for copies of the documents. The state does not charge a discovery fee in these cases. The prosecutor charges the defendant the \$20 fee for the discovery, but the law firm retains the fee rather than turning it over to the township.

The prosecutor asserts this is an appropriate practice permitted by a January 9, 1991 memorandum from the state attorney general’s office. This memo modified an earlier memo by discontinuing the state fee for discovery provided through municipal prosecutors. The memo allowed municipal prosecutors to establish fees for these packets. The team believes the intention of this memo was not to permit prosecutors to set or personally collect fees for discovery. Rather, we believe the intention was that the prosecutor could have a fee established and collected in accordance with the appropriate authorization.

We see parallels to other municipal ordinances authorizing other officials to collect fees. It is well understood that the fees are to be turned over to the municipal treasury, and not retained by the official charged with collecting the fee. Indeed, N.J.S.A. 40A:5-15 requires that all funds received from any source shall be turned over to the treasurer or deposited to the credit of the municipality in the municipality’s bank within 48 hours.

Some may assert that the fee represents compensation for the work associated with the discovery. We agree that some incremental expense is incurred for the cost of photocopies and postage. We do not believe it amounts to \$20. We believe the time spent reviewing the documents by the attorney should be, like the discovery for township cases, included in the prosecutor's current compensation.

The New Jersey State Police report that during 1997, 53 Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) cases were submitted for discovery to the Dover prosecutor. Through September, 1998, an additional 53 DWI cases were submitted. Annualized, we anticipate the 1998 DWI case total to be 70. The State Police do not track criminal and other traffic cases. Notably, the police may submit one case for discovery as many as three or four times due to defense attorneys updating their information, clients changing attorneys, and due to multiple defendants involved in one case. The State Police do not track how many times they submit a case for discovery. Accordingly, the case count is a very conservative estimate of actual discovery submissions.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the prosecutor review the practice of retaining the discovery fee for state police cases with the township attorney and attorney general.

We compute the additional revenue at an annual average of 61 cases @ \$20 each.

Revenue Enhancement: \$1,220

POLICE

Dover Township is one of the communities listed as an "urban" community in the New Jersey uniform crime report. The NJ Division of Law and Public Safety gives this designation to all communities categorized by the NJ Division of State and Regional Planning as densely populated with extensive development and with populations above 50,000.

According to the chief of police, Dover Township is comparable to Hamilton Township in Mercer County, and Edison and Woodbridge, Middlesex County, and Cherry Hill Township in Camden County. Based on the following table, the team found those comparisons valid:

Municipality	Crime Index	Crime Per 1,000	Population	Square Miles	Sworn Officers
Cherry Hill	3,151	45.7	68,982	24.18	125
Dover	3,512	41.9	83,776	41.61	134
Edison	3,152	33.5	93,939	30.65	134
Hamilton	2,147	24.9	86,240	39.38	171
Woodbridge	3,918	41.4	94,714	23.10	200

The total number of crimes per 1,000 population in Dover is 41.9 with a majority of the crime in the categories of burglary, larceny and domestic violence. The statewide crimes per 1,000 population is 40.9. According to the chief, both violent and non-violent crimes occur primarily because of illegal drug activity.

During the 1998 budget year, the police department expended \$10,122,313 for salaries & wages and \$483,161 for other expenses. The fully-loaded wage cost was \$17,024,976.

Organization/Operations

The police department is divided into two divisions, operations and services.

According to the approved table of organization, the police department staff consists of a chief, two captains, five lieutenants, 15 sergeants, 16 detectives, 94 police officers, and one safety police officer, for a total of 134 sworn staff. Additionally, there are 46 civilians employed, including 13 dispatchers and five full-time jail guards/booking officers.

One captain heads the operations division, which includes the patrol and detective bureaus. The other captain heads the service division, which manages the records, vehicle fleet, property/evidence, animal control, traffic safety, budget, and data processing matters.

One lieutenant is assigned to the detective bureau, one to the special operations unit, and three as patrol shift commanders.

One sergeant is assigned to supervise lost property, evidence, the jail and maintenance operations. One sergeant is assigned to the K-9 unit. One sergeant is assigned to the detective bureau. The remaining 13 sergeants are assigned to supervise patrol functions.

The remaining 111 officers are assigned to various tasks in the detective and juvenile bureaus, the traffic unit, and general patrol duties.

As currently structured, we feel the span of control and scope of responsibilities in this department is appropriate. However, we believe that the concentration of administrative duties on the service division captain may cause difficulties because of the diversity of duties. In the future, the township may wish to consider creating one additional captain by combining the duties of the special operations lieutenant with selected administrative and planning functions. The township could eliminate the special operations lieutenant position with this restructuring.

Schedule

The police patrol day and evening shifts currently work an eight-hour shift for five days, then are off for two days (5-2). The midnight shift works a 10-hour shift for four days and then is off for three days (4-3). The 5-2 and 4-3 work schedules provide the township with at least 2,080 hours per officer per year before leave time is taken. The mix of the two schedule patterns appears to be working well in Dover. The chief reports that the 4-3 schedule on the midnight shift worked to attract some senior officers to the midnight shift. This provides valuable experience to a shift

that generally is heavily weighted with less experienced officers. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, this schedule also makes these officers available for court testimony or warrants service without incurring overtime.

Beat Patrol Analysis

The team performed a workload analysis to determine the number of police officers needed for patrol duties. Currently, the day and evening shifts use a minimum of 12 officers per shift. On the midnight shift, they use a minimum of 10 officers per shift. Occasionally in the summer, the department uses 11 police officers on the midnight shift. Using time and attendance records provided by the police department, the team computed the officer availability, after training and leave, to be 1,605 hours per year. Dover's officer availability is about average for NJ police departments.

There were approximately 100,399 calls for service in 1997. Approximately 25,000 of these calls were administrative and transferred to another telephone line in headquarters. The dispatch system computer reports the average time spent per call on the remaining 75,000 calls for service was 38.33 minutes. Using a formula provided by the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Standards Section, the team computed that the Dover Police Department should have 88 police officers on general patrol duties.

Currently, the authorized staff in the patrol division is 104. When one deducts the 13 officers assigned to specialized units, such as K-9 and traffic, and three lieutenants, the patrol division is at a current strength of 88. We conclude that the department has properly sized the patrol force.

We believe that the department can decrease the patrol calls for service if the recommendations in the calls for service and traffic services sections of this report are implemented. A reduction in the patrol calls for service will increase the time available for routine patrol, and allow the patrol to accommodate some growth in calls for service without additional staff.

Calls for Service

Currently, police officers are dispatched to a location for each of the 75,000 calls for service. The team was told that many of these calls concerned incidents or events that were being reported "after the fact," and often were simply to properly document an insurance claim. The department records show 15,272 "calls" consisting of a citizen arriving at police headquarters to report non-emergency events. The police handle these calls by dispatching a police officer to police headquarters to take the citizen's report.

A sergeant estimated that approximately one hour is spent traveling to headquarters and preparing each report. The 60 minute estimate is close to the per call time estimates of 45 minutes developed by the NJ Division of Criminal Justice, and the actual time per call recorded in Dover when one includes the travel time to headquarters. Accordingly, we feel it is accurate.

Were the police administration to use a report form designed for walk-in reports, the citizen could speak with the watch commander who is already in the headquarters near the public entrance. Where appropriate, the citizen could be given a report form to fill out and return by

mail, or could submit the report by e-mail through a form on the township web site. The report would then be reviewed by the watch commander or another officer for completeness, who could then advise the citizen as to what type of police action to expect. The officer taking the report would forward the report to the detective bureau, traffic unit, or other appropriate unit in the department. Should the police revise the method of taking walk-in reports, the township would increase patrol time by 15,272 hours per year, or approximately 14 work hours on each shift, representing about 15% of the patrol time.

The police may wish to consider a procedure through which police aides or individuals on light duty may record reports for selected categories of non-emergency incidents over the telephone or at headquarters. The implementation of this type of service expedites the taking of the police report for the citizen since they are frequently required to wait for a patrol officer to arrive at headquarters or the caller's location. Additionally, individuals from out of the area who need to report an incident and find it inconvenient to return to Dover to do so in person, may find this service useful.

The success of this program in other jurisdictions appears to rely on:

1. a clear specification of types of calls eligible for telephone reporting;
2. the ability of the citizen to choose whether to give a report over the phone or wait for an officer to respond;
3. training of dispatchers so that they can effectively communicate the options to the citizen; and
4. ensuring that reports taken over the phone are reviewed for accuracy and are included in any feedback to the patrol shifts so that police are aware of incidents occurring within their area of responsibility.

Recommendation:

We recommend the police department revise its method of taking non-emergency reports from citizens. The department should use the newly available time to provide additional traffic enforcement, as discussed in the traffic services section.

Productivity Enhancement: \$105,120

Traffic Services

During 1997, Ocean County recorded approximately 22,000 reportable accidents, of which approximately 4,000, or 18% occurred in Dover Township. Dover represents about 20% of the county population. Presently, the police department has a traffic unit assigned to address policing issues specifically related to traffic. Currently, nine officers are assigned to the traffic unit.

The traffic officers are assigned to function with the general patrol force rather than as a separate unit. Depending on the volume of calls for service, the traffic officers may not conduct any traffic specific functions, but rather respond to other calls for service. Likewise, since there is a

close relationship between the traffic enforcement and all other law enforcement activities, the responsibility of enforcing traffic laws and regulations should be shared by all uniformed personnel.

Officers interviewed felt that the volume of accidents and other traffic problems such as speeding and aggressive driving could be reduced if the traffic unit were not dispatched on non-emergency calls and given more time to concentrate on traffic enforcement.

The success of a traffic unit relies heavily on a first-line supervisor who is proactive in selecting target areas within the community. Having the supervisor select a problem spot for high visibility patrol and targeted enforcement can produce significant results in improved traffic safety. The Paterson, NJ police traffic unit established a productivity measure of 10 separate officer-initiated stops per eight-hour shift. The unit supervisor expected each officer to find traffic violations and stop the vehicle. The issuance of a warning or a summons is left to the officer's discretion. The supervisor adjusted the goal if the officer was diverted to an accident investigation, or some other time-consuming activity. The goal provided a productivity measure without a mandatory summons quota. If the Dover Police established a productivity goal for its traffic unit, the team believes traffic safety would improve, and summons activity increase. We anticipate sufficient time can be allocated to this function if non-emergency calls are stacked and non-emergency walk-in reports are taken as recommended in the calls for service section of this report.

Generally, LBGR does not recommend specialized units as an efficient way to provide services; however, given the size of the community, the traffic volume, and the size of the existing patrol division, we feel specialization is warranted in Dover. Where traffic units exist, the NJ Division of Criminal Justice recommends they operate under a directed, selective enforcement protocol rather than as self-directed officers. The duties assigned could include development plan review, traffic counts, statistical analysis, and other administrative duties relating to grant programs, such as DWI and seat belt enforcement.

Summonses

The team reviewed the summons activity for the police department. From 1987 to 1996, the summons activity ranged between 10,000 and 14,226 summonses annually. In 1997, the summons count was 8,695, not including parking. Compared to other departments of this size, the number of summonses in Dover appeared low. In response to this assertion, police officers stated they were responding from call to call, report writing (both in the field and at police headquarters), responding to citizens complaints, and conducting general administrative duties at headquarters. Some officers expressed the view that some officers were not enthusiastic because they were irritated with the prosecutor regarding plea-bargaining and with judicial decisions.

Given the staffing level of the police department, the size of the municipality, the volume of calls and the officers' involvement in plea-bargaining, the team found these explanations not credible. Based upon the team's observation, traffic violations occur regularly and generally patrol officers fail to intervene. The team found officers who worked eight-hour shifts for 20 days in a month and did not observe a traffic violation worthy of a summons.

The team believes this problem is, in part, due to first-line supervisors not taking an active leadership role on their shift.

Although the team does not advocate a quota system for summons activity, officers who fail to initiate law enforcement contacts with the public should be retrained or reprimanded. Supervisors who permit these work habits to exist should be retrained to be proactive or removed from the supervisory roles.

Patrol Operations, (3rd ed.), published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) states that generally, an enforcement ratio of 20 convictions for hazardous driving per each accident with injury or fatality will reduce the accident rate. In 1997, the total number of summonses for violations other than parking was 8,695. There were 812 accidents with injuries and/or fatalities in 1997. Multiplying the number of accidents with injuries by 20, based on the IACP formula, the team would expect to see summonses for moving violations approximating 16,200 per year, if reducing traffic accidents is a police goal.

Many police professionals also find traffic stops can serve to discourage criminal activity, increase warrant arrests, and generally provide opportunities for officers to reveal criminal activity. Accordingly, we anticipate increasing traffic enforcement will improve police efforts to control crime.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the police chief instruct the shift supervisors and officers about the relationship between their daily activity, the department's productivity, and the accident rate. The chief should then monitor department productivity, requiring the department supervisors to be accountable for each shift's proactive enforcement activities.

During the time the team was conducting their fieldwork, the chief assigned two police officers from patrol to respond to quality of life complaints, in response to the increasing calls for service in this category. Accordingly, enforcement for this category of complaint has increased considerably.

The team commends the chief for his response to this increasing category of calls.

Jailers

The police department presently employs jailers/booking officers to monitor prisoners held in the department's cellblock. In addition, to security and booking activities, these individuals provide fingerprint services to township residents who request it. The department hired jailers in an attempt to free police officers to return to patrol, rather than have an officer held in the station when prisoners were present. Reportedly, the job duties in the labor agreement restrict the ability of the department to use these officers for other duties. The team notes that many municipalities hire civilian police aides to provide many police services such as after-the-fact crime reports,

traffic control, and prisoner handling. The use of civilians for prisoner handling should include written procedures that comply with the statutory authorization for the use of force provided in N.J.S.A. 2C:3-7c.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township replace the position of jailer/booking officer with civilian police aides.

We recommend the police chief and township attorney review the existing prisoner handling policies and procedures to verify that if use of force is required, appropriate staff is available.

Records Management

The records office staff consists of a civilian supervisor, four full-time, and one part-time clerk.

During 1997, the record bureau responded to 21,239 requests for information.

The record bureau is located on the first floor of the department and provides both walk-in and mail service. In addition, the bureau provides service on Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. using a part-time employee. It appears from the volume of citizens using these weekend hours that they are quite useful.

We commend the department for providing this convenient schedule at minimal cost.

Currently, the department also has clerical staff processing alarm registrations and false alarm fees separate from the record bureau. The team feels the department could handle the alarm office functions more efficiently if assigned to the record bureau. If the department were to reassign one person from the alarm office to the record bureau, we believe the alarm records and billing could be accomplished with time left to assist with record bureau duties.

Recommendation:

We recommend the chief review the current staff assignments.

The police record bureau was responsible for \$34,282 in fees in 1998. The township committee has authorized a fee of \$1 for a copy of a police report and \$20 for preparing copies of a file for discovery. When compared to other municipalities with which the team is familiar, the fees for police reports and discovery are low. Police report fees of \$5 and discovery fees of \$25 are common. The bureau generates an average of 3,900 police reports a year. An increase of \$4 per report would generate \$14,400 annually. Additionally, the record bureau prepares approximately 840 discoveries per year. An increase of \$5 would generate approximately \$4,200 annually. A fee schedule should also include fees for copies of audio-and videotapes, photographs, electronic data such as computer diskettes and discovery requests for files more than 50 pages.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township committee revise the fee schedule for police reports and discovery.

Revenue Enhancement: \$18,600

Police records are stored throughout the police facility. Those interviewed regarding record retention commented that record storage was becoming an increasing problem. The department was, at the time of the team's fieldwork, considering a significant remodeling of the record storage room to accommodate additional paper files in anticipation of the filing system becoming overwhelmed.

The team is familiar with document imaging systems that provide rapid access to documents electronically. The State Library, Division of Archives, does not accept optical disk or other magnetic media for archival purposes. Accordingly, records that have a retention beyond seven years should be retained on paper or microfilm. Magnetic media is acceptable for shorter-term records, and quite useful for accessing archival records without handling the file. This provides the opportunity to store the paper records remotely, without the need for frequent access. Vendors of document imaging systems report systems appropriate for Dover cost approximately \$35,000. The cost is significantly offset by what the department would have spent on a filing cabinet system.

Recommendations:

The team recommends that the police administration explore the feasibility of placing the existing documents on an imaging system. We recommend the township consult with the State Library, Division of Archives, for assistance in acquiring any system, and to assure compliance with the records retention laws.

One-time Value Added Expense: \$35,000

While the team was conducting their investigation, the police administration contacted a vendor to demonstrate how document imaging would work in the police department.

Detective Bureau

The detective bureau handled approximately 24,838 cases and cleared 7,700 cases in 1997, a clearance rate of 31%. The Dover Police Department is operating well above the state and county clearance levels of 20%.

The detective bureau structure is unique in Dover. In addition to their specific daily assignments, detectives are responsible for monitoring crime trends within a geographical area of the community. This method of organizing the bureau appears to be quite effective.

We commend the police administration for this creative method of assigning detective responsibilities and the outstanding clearance rate.

The Ocean County Sheriff's Office provides crime scene technicians to record each crime scene. The team was impressed with the value that this service provides in correlating information with crimes outside of Dover, and in revealing trends.

We commend both the police administration and the county for this cooperative effort.

The youth bureau detectives act as liaison officers with each high school. In the summer months, these detectives are assigned to the beach area to assist with the seasonal activity in that area of the township.

Outside Employment

Police officers who also work as police officers for employers other than the municipality, such as directing traffic at a construction site, present unique issues to a municipal government. In Dover, prior to April, 1998, private parties wishing to employ a police officer for work outside the normal service provided by the township, would contact the police administration which arranged for the needed coverage. The contractor would then pay the officer directly. The township was not compensated for the administrative time spent in arranging the assignments or the liability exposures that accrue to the township when a township officer is acting in an official capacity while on the private job.

As of April, 1998, the township handles outside employment of police as a transaction between the township and the contractor. An officer's pay for the outside work is handled through the township payroll, and the township retains a portion of the reimbursement as an administrative fee. Reportedly, the annual income from the administrative fee was estimated to be approximately \$60,000. This practice compensates the township and clarifies the line of authority for officers assigned to "outside work."

We commend the township and the police administration for implementing these revisions to the outside employment of police program.

Evidence Retention

The team reviewed the disposition of recovered property and the storage of evidence. Currently, the department assigns a sergeant to supervise both the evidence room and property that is recovered or abandoned. The NJ Attorney General has promulgated guidelines concerning the retention of evidence. The department appears to conform to those guidelines. State law governs the manner by which a municipality may dispose of unclaimed property. The police department has complied with the law concerning the sale or disposition of unclaimed property.

On occasions, the township has coordinated the auction of unclaimed property with the auction of unneeded municipal equipment, having the auction for both groups of items run by the sergeant at the same time.

We commend the township staff for cooperatively handling this housekeeping task.

Vacation Leave

As may be expected, the police calls for service are much greater during the summer season. This is also the period of time when many police employees use their personal vacation time. This results in the department budgeting an amount of overtime due to the increased staffing needs. The team was not able to quantify the amount of overtime used to cover summer vacation minimum staffing; however, those interviewed believed it was significant. The team is familiar with contract provisions in other municipalities that restrict the number of staff that can take vacation at any time during critical seasons. We believe limiting vacations during the summer months would be a useful tool to allow the police chief to provide adequate coverage while controlling overtime.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township implement seasonal limitations on how many officers may take vacation at once as a means to control overtime.

Training

The team reviewed the training provided to the police officers to verify compliance with the requirement of the NJ Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ). Proper training is critical not only to the individual officer, but also to the municipality. Heavy liability exposures exist for municipalities that have not properly trained their police. The team believes the department complies with the DCJ requirements. We note that most training is accomplished in-house using the department's own staff. This appears to be a very cost-effective means of providing the officers with the required training.

We commend the police administration for an efficient and effective training program.

The team found that the training provided to lieutenants and captains concerning the supervision and management of a police department appeared limited. Several nationally recognized police management programs, such as the FBI National Academy, are available to train police management. The team understands that these programs can take a supervisor off the job for an extended period, but believes the investment in professional management is worth the expense. The team understands the FBI National Academy tuition is \$500. In addition, the officer attending would need to be removed from duty for 12 weeks while attending the academy. Sending one officer every other year should not be a burden to the department.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township provide FBI National Academy or other senior management training to the department's supervisory staff.

Value Added Expense: \$500

Community/Safety Projects

The department has a number of creative projects that enhance the community safety and create affirmative police activity in the community. These programs include training officers for water

rescues, student internships, establishing fatal accident response teams, cooperating with the municipal alliance, neighborhood watch programs, juvenile conference committee participation, a Boy Scout Explorer program, Auxiliary Police program, and the parole visitation program.

We commend the police chief for instituting these projects that enhance the quality of life and provide more effective police services.

Escorts

Reportedly, a number of administrative deliveries are regularly requested from both the police administration and other township departments for reasons that appear to be for convenience and not necessary for police protection. The team appreciates that, at times, an officer should escort another employee with a large sum of cash to a bank. This would occupy very little time. However, routinely delivering deposits and other paperwork for multiple departments is detracting from the primary duties of an officer.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the routine delivery functions be reassigned to the existing mail staff, or coordinated to minimize the time required.

Alarms

During 1997, the police department responded to 5,632 false alarms consuming 938 hours of patrol time. In addition to consuming patrol time, risks due to increased driving speed and development of a complacent attitude among officers can lead to grave consequences. The current ordinance provides that the alarm owner can have seven false alarms before the township assesses penalties. Changes to state law in 1997 have made portions of the township alarm ordinance obsolete.

If the township amended the alarm ordinance to allow just three false alarms a year, the township would realize an addition of \$22,400 in revenue from 224 alarms. The alarm ordinance mandates the owner to register the alarm system with the township. Registration is free. As of November 1998, the township had registered 8,800 alarm systems. Through March, 1999, 11,562 systems were registered. According to the police staff, of all the alarms answered each day, an average of five are not registered. The staff estimates that this volume has been consistent for the past two years. Accordingly, the number of alarms installed is not known. When the police respond to unregistered alarms, the department sends the owner the necessary paperwork, and most follow through by registering their system. Those who do not register receive follow up notices. To date, no enforcement action has been taken against those ignoring the notices.

By registering each alarm, the township would have a more accurate record of the alarm locations and owners. This registration information would assist with the notification letters that the department generates for false alarm notifications.

Many municipalities have established registration fees for new alarms. A one-time fee of \$10 would compensate the township for the clerical time spent in processing the alarm information for those citizens choosing to have an alarm. Assuming 100 alarms are registered each month, the township will realize \$12,000 in new revenue.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the governing body amend the alarm ordinance to comply with the state law amendments and reduce the number of false alarms allowed before penalties are assessed, to three.

Revenue Enhancement: \$22,400

We recommend that the township establish a fee for alarm registrations. The township may wish to encourage citizens with existing alarms that are not registered to register before the fee takes effect.

Revenue Enhancement: \$12,000

In the records management section of this report the team recommends reassigning the alarm registration and billing functions and one staff person to the records bureau.

Fleet Replacement

The Dover Police fleet consists of 112 vehicles including trucks, buses, trailers, vans, undercover cars, and a wrecker. Automobiles totaled 94. Of the autos, 28 were 1994 or 1995 models. Approximately 17 were 1996 or later models. The patrol vehicles are averaging approximately 24,000 miles per year. Additional uncounted operating hours accumulate due to idling time when the officer is out of the auto while responding to a call or on a traffic stop. Those interviewed reported that vehicle replacement was inconsistent from year to year. Some years the department received seven new vehicles, in other years, three.

The patrol staffing per shift (12 officers), plus having four vehicles in reserve for breakdowns and accidents computes to a required patrol fleet of 16 autos. Autos assigned to superior officers, detectives, and traffic officers, consisting of vehicles retired from patrol, add 33 vehicles to the fleet for a total auto fleet of 49 autos. Reserve vehicles should not be necessary for the supervisory/administrative fleet because vehicles assigned to officers who are off duty will be available. The department has adopted the practice of assigning most autos to an officer for primary use. This practice does increase the care provided to each vehicle and allows for longer vehicle life due to better care of the equipment, but requires buying more autos than would be necessary if the vehicle was used more intensely. Notably, few Dover vehicles have been out of service due to traffic accidents.

The team believes that using patrol vehicles more intensely will reduce the need for many of the older autos in the existing fleet. This computation assumes eight new vehicles (half the patrol fleet) are purchased each year. Moving two year-old autos into the detective and administrative fleet will result in the replacement of administrative cars every five years. The township can use

vehicles coming out of the detective and supervisory fleet in other departments. A less aggressive replacement schedule would necessitate a larger reserve ratio to accommodate more breakdowns in the patrol fleet.

While the retention of some older vehicles for third party traffic control details and the DARE program is warranted, it appears that the township could reduce the number of older vehicles in the police fleet by approximately 35 vehicles. We have not estimated a sale value regarding the older vehicles because we believe the value is nominal. Additionally, the township may wish to transfer many vehicles to other departments to replace older vehicles. Deleting these vehicles from the fleet auto insurance provided by the JIF would save approximately \$800 per vehicle annually, or \$28,000.

The team recognizes that fleet replacement plans other than that described here, have merit and may be more useful to the police service in Dover.

Recommendations:

We recommend the township committee direct the township administrator and police chief to recommend a fleet replacement program.

We recommend the township committee establish and maintain a vehicle replacement budget consistent with the fleet replacement plan.

We recommend selling or transferring 35 older police vehicles.

Cost Savings: \$28,000

Salary Guides

According to the labor agreement, an entry level patrol officer reaches the top level of pay in six steps. In reviewing the League of Municipalities salary guide tables, the average step program is 6.2 steps. The number of steps in Dover is average. Should the township wish to add a new, lower entry-level step to the range, it may serve to reduce the initial cost of new hires.

N.J.S.A. 40A:14-179 mandates that the base salary of the chief of police shall be higher than the base salary of the next ranking officer in the department. Our review of the chief and captains' base pay for 1998 shows the chief's base pay is \$3,345 below the captain's base pay.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township comply with N.J.S.A. 40A:14-179.

Shared Services

Currently, the township is involved in shared services with the local fire districts, the school district, and the parking authority for a variety of services. In addition, the township "contracts

in” public assistance services with South Toms River Borough. Reportedly, Island Heights Borough had inquired about contracting for police services several years ago; however, the township and borough were not able to agree on the terms of a contract.

Both Island Heights and Lavallette Boroughs are surrounded by Dover Township, and already share school services thorough the regional district. Sharing other services such as police patrol, detective bureau services, the variety of public works services, recreation, and other services provided by any municipality through contractual arrangements could be cost-effective for both municipalities. The state has a variety of programs available to encourage the sharing of services. The Regional Efficiency Development Incentive (REDI) and the Regional Efficiency Award Program (REAP) Act provides grants and tax reduction aid to communities studying and implementing shared services through the NJ Department of Community Affairs. Notably, the act provides that agreements entered into after July 1, 1997 are eligible for funding.

We encourage the township to consider favorably any new opportunities for shared services that may present themselves.

Dispatching

Dispatching for police, fire, and EMS consists of two main activities: call-taking and radio communications. The call-taker typically speaks with the citizen, obtains relevant information and keys the information into a computer terminal. The dispatcher is maintaining routine radio communication with the various patrol and fire units in service. A call for service keyed into the computer by the call-taker is received by the dispatcher and communicated to the appropriate units in the field. Phone calls coming from the public can be classified in one of three categories: emergency calls (911 calls), urgent calls (minor accidents), and routine business calls (e.g., request for an accident report).

In many smaller communities, the call-taker and dispatcher is the same person. In Dover Township, 911 calls are routed to the Ocean County Dispatch Center, located in Dover. When the call-taker identifies the call as originating in Dover, and the caller does not need emergency medical information, the county operator transfers the call to the township call-takers. There, additional information is gathered, and the appropriate police, fire or EMS units dispatched.

In 22 of the 33 Ocean County towns, the Ocean County dispatch center initially answers 911 calls. In nine towns, the county also handles urgent and business calls, as well as the radio communications for the police, fire and EMS.

In Dover, Dover call-takers answer all calls that come in on regular telephone lines. Either the police or fire dispatchers dispatch these calls. The police department employs 13 full-time and seven part-time dispatchers. The salary and wage budget is \$674,646. The fully-loaded wage costs are \$768,869. The “other expenses” are embedded in the services division budget and were not estimated.

The fire districts employ five full-time and 12 part-time dispatchers. The salary and wage (S&W) budget is \$232,036. The fully-loaded wage costs are \$313,586. The “other expenses” are embedded in the general budget of the joint fire district and were not estimated. The total combined cost for the current dispatch operation is \$1,082,455.

During 1997, the Dover dispatch center handled 100,000 calls, including those transferred from Ocean County. Of these, approximately 25,000 were administrative business calls transferred to another telephone line. Overwhelmingly, calls of all categories were for the police department. We compute each police dispatcher handles about 7,700 calls per year. Fire calls totaled 1,739 or approximately five per day. EMS calls totaled 5,403 or about 14 per day.

Comparatively, the Ocean County dispatch center handled 209,986 calls during the same period, including those transferred to Dover. It employs 19 certified call-takers and radio dispatchers for three shifts, seven days per week. We compute that each dispatcher is handling approximately 11,051 calls per year.

The team observed both the Ocean County and the Dover Township operations. The county operates a modern facility with up-to-date technical capabilities. The Dover facility is older, with equipment that the police administration feels is in need of replacement.

The team observed that 48% of the police department job-related injuries afflicted dispatchers in the Dover facility. These injuries were typically carpal tunnel syndrome injuries. Comparatively, the Ocean County facility (handling more calls per person) experienced a 1% incidence of the job-related injuries. While the team is not able to discern why this discrepancy exists, the contrast is striking.

Those interviewed report that the police have explored plans to relocate the dispatch center to another room within the police complex. Additionally, we learned the fire district is exploring plans to relocate its dispatch operation to the fire academy building. The capital cost for the police relocation was estimated at over \$600,000. The Fire District 1 Administrator estimated the cost to relocate the fire dispatch to the new police facility or to the academy building at \$400,000. Reportedly, the fire districts have estimated the need to employ an additional five fire dispatchers to fully staff a separate dispatch center. We estimate the additional dispatchers, at the entry-level salary of \$31,341 and full benefits, would cost approximately \$227,000 per year.

The team observed the Ocean County call-takers and dispatchers on three occasions. During our observation, we noted the call-takers and dispatchers on duty were not overwhelmed with call activity. Dover, like most municipalities, experiences most of its call activity in the late afternoon and evening. The team believes that the Dover activity could readily be absorbed within the existing county dispatch organization, with the exception of evenings and weekends, when an additional call-taker and dispatcher may be warranted. We calculate the additional cost to the county of taking over the Dover call-taking and dispatching to be \$112,000. We assumed the county would need two full-time and one-half time people at the county’s average dispatcher salary of \$32,000 plus benefits. The county’s existing facility has sufficient extra workstations to accommodate the proposed additional staff. While the county is currently providing this service

to other municipalities without charge, and Dover could reasonably argue for similar arrangements, we computed an estimated cost should the county require compensation for Dover's inclusion. Clearly, Ocean County and Dover officials need to meet and discuss the feasibility of this recommendation, and clarify many operational details to assure a smooth transition for this critical function.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township and fire districts contract with Ocean County for all call-taking and dispatch services, including 911, urgent, and business calls, and discontinue consideration of reconfiguring the local police and fire dispatch center.

Annual Cost Savings: \$768,869
One-time Savings from not relocating police dispatch: \$600,000
One-time Savings from not relocating fire dispatch: \$400,000
Annual Savings from not hiring five new fire employees: \$227,000
Annual Value Added Expense: \$112,000

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Six first aid squads service Dover Township. These private, volunteer squads are strategically located throughout the community and on many occasions travel out of their service area to respond to calls in other parts of the community.

The costs of these organizations are offset by financial assistance from private donations, the fire districts and the municipal budget. In addition, the township has purchased ambulances and other equipment needed by these organizations and made them available for their use. During 1998, the township appropriated \$156,000 as a contribution to the squads for fuel and vehicle and equipment repairs. This expense is in addition to the expense of acquiring and insuring the vehicles.

In 1997, the police call accounting system reports 5,403 medical calls for service answered by the first aid squads. This computes to 2.5 calls per day for each squad.

We commend the EMS volunteers in Dover for their extraordinary efforts in providing this vital service to the community. Clearly, the volunteer effort provides a tremendous value to the community.

The fire dispatcher, located in the police dispatch center, handles the dispatching of the first aid squads.

We reviewed the response time of the squads. The team noted that police officers on the scene frequently inquired about the squad's estimated time of arrival. On further review, the team found occasions where four and five medical calls were "stacked." The team interviewed people

familiar with the squad operations, and learned that it was common for one squad to go from call to call while other first aid squads failed to muster a crew. This issue is common among volunteer squads in New Jersey, particularly during the workday when many volunteers are out of town at their place of employment. The volume of calls can often overwhelm the squad members who are able to respond during the day.

Recommendation:

We recommend the EMS squads and the fire department explore the possibility of using the fire fighter/inspectors on medical calls as a backup to the first aid squads. This would provide additional help during times when the volume of calls exceeds the volunteers' ability to respond. The team understands the fire inspectors are not trained as EMTs. They would be able to drive an ambulance and assist a volunteer EMT, using the volunteers who are available to respond more effectively.

The EMS squads and township may also wish to explore the use of private ambulance services for backup to the volunteers.

Response times of the squads were not available from the dispatch records through June, 1998. Each squad maintained records of its calls at its own headquarters. In July, 1998, the fire districts installed a computer-aided dispatch system in the dispatch center. Accordingly, our evaluation of response times was limited to the month of July, 1998. We reviewed a random group of calls for medical service. The team observed that there were some discrepancies between the times the calls were classified as "received" by the police dispatcher, and the time the call was logged in by the fire dispatcher. This was unusual as the police and fire dispatchers work in the same room. A random sample revealed an elapse time of three to four minutes between the time the police handled a call the to the time the fire dispatcher logged the call. We ruled out discrepancies between the computer time clocks and delays caused by another call occupying the dispatcher. The delay existed because the fire dispatcher did not log the call in a timely way. Dispatchers did not log the calls because they knew that the squads were already responding to a call and another squad would not respond because volunteers were not available.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the procedures for call logging be standardized within the dispatch center.

Billing for Service

Many municipalities have successfully implemented a fee system for emergency medical service. Typically, the municipality establishes a fee and submits an invoice for emergency medical service. These charges are often eligible for reimbursement through the patient's medical insurance or Medicare. We recognize that some individuals do not have medical coverage and do not have the means to pay for emergency medical service. Municipalities with which the team is familiar have established procedures to adjust the bill accordingly.

The establishment of a municipal billing system would reduce the amount of money raised through the property tax while allowing the township to continue to provide significant aid to the volunteers. We note that the township must address important legal and organizational details to implement a billing system that preserves the volunteer status of the squads.

Ocean City, NJ established a billing system in 1997. It charges \$350 per call, and has a contractor produce the billing for a fee equal to 10% of the collections. Ocean City reports actual collections are 53% of the amount billed, resulting in an effective reimbursement per call of \$186. Accordingly, we estimate that billing for EMS in Dover would generate approximately \$1,004,958 annually. We believe that the expense of a third party contract could be avoided in Dover by using the administrative and clerical staff available in the fire prevention bureau to produce bills and post payments. We estimate that appropriate software and training will be a one-time expense of \$25,000.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township consider establishing an EMS fee to recover some of the cost of providing EMS services.

One-time Value Added Expense: \$25,000
Revenue Enhancement: \$1,004,958

MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE

The Dover Township Municipal Alliance is a program funded partly by a state grant from the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and partly through the municipal budget. The purpose of the alliance is to unify the efforts to prevent substance abuse through the schools and other local organizations within the community. The municipal alliance works under the guidance of the County Health Department, Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, and consists of representatives from 19 community organizations and government agencies. In support of the alliance efforts, the township employs a director and assistant director, both part-time.

During 1998, the Dover Municipal Alliance operated on a \$56,250 budget. The grant funded \$45,000 and the municipal budget funded \$11,250. Additionally, \$33,750 of in-kind contributions were reported which consist primarily of municipally-funded salary for the alliance staff, and police officer time spent educating young people on drug and alcohol abuse. In-kind contributions by the township also include office space and office supplies.

The alliance provides assistance to various youth programs in the Toms River Schools, and to community organizations providing youth programs, and trains police officers in prevention education to be presented to all sixth-grade students. Programs for parents and grandparents of youth involved with substance abuse are also provided. In addition, the alliance has begun a health fair directed at senior citizens. This includes drug and alcohol abuse awareness, and has

utilized Community Development Block Grant funds to purchase and distribute emergency flashing light bulbs for seniors to use to assist emergency responders locate their home when help is needed.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, each dollar spent on drug abuse prevention saves four or five dollars in cost for drug treatment.

We commend the Dover Municipal Alliance for their hard work to control drug and alcohol abuse. The team is aware of various studies that have concluded that substance abuse education is particularly effective in preventing abuse, and very cost-effective as compared to treatment, law enforcement and judicial punishment.

RECREATION

The recreation department provides recreational opportunities for residents of Dover. The department has divisions responsible for programs, grounds maintenance, public tree maintenance, the Bey Lea golf course, beaches, municipal pool, ice skating rink, and a maintenance shop. The director of recreation supervises the department. We review each division separately.

The township has 12 existing parks and two parks under construction, containing some 772 acres of land. While some of the public lands have natural areas, there are numerous ball fields, tennis and basketball courts, and playground areas in the township. The division has a variety of equipment, ranging from a small dump truck, an aerial bucket truck, and pickup trucks to grass cutting equipment, tractors, stump cutters, and trailers. The township hires approximately 68 seasonal employees in the various divisions.

Public Lands

The public lands division has 10 full-time employees, one supervisor and one mechanic. The 1998 salary and wages for this division were \$416,309, plus overtime of \$20,284. The other expenses were \$42,702. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$668,901. The total expenditures were \$711,603.

This division's primary mission is to cut grass during the April through October growing season, and maintain safe playing surfaces by repairing holes and other damage. Secondly, they attend to more elaborate turf restoration projects, and maintenance of non-playing surface areas. The grass cutting is prioritized into three categories, playing surfaces being first, passive park areas second, and non-park public lands, such as traffic islands and retention basins, third. Accordingly, during the spring growth season some grass areas may appear somewhat unkempt because the division is fully-occupied cutting ball fields. The recreation department did not maintain records quantifying the time spent on grass cutting vs. the other duties. We estimate that 75% of the annual staff time is occupied cutting grass.

The department reported there were approximately 60 acres of playing surface. It had no record of how many acres of grass were being cut; accordingly, we are only able to estimate a cost per acre. We estimated that 200 acres of grass require cutting. Assuming 32 cuts per year, we compute 6,400 acres are cut each year. Based on 75% of the total public lands expenditures, the cost per acre for grass cutting is \$83.40. The State of New Jersey has awarded contracts for grass cutting for prices ranging from \$47.64 per acre to \$54.45 per acre. The team recognizes the public lands division performs other important duties beyond grass cutting. We feel the township could realize savings by contracting out grass cutting and reducing the staff in the public lands division to a level needed for maintenance other than grass cutting. We are not able to quantify savings with confidence because we did not have adequate information regarding the acreage cut and staff time spent cutting vs. other duties.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township begin collecting the basic data needed to properly evaluate if contracting out some or all grass cutting is cost effective.

During the winter, the public lands division is responsible for the maintenance of park equipment, and conducts the annual Christmas tree recycling program. This program collected 2,454 trees in 1995, 2,743 trees in 1996 and 3,256 trees in 1997. Residents are asked to drop their tree off at one of nine locations in the community where they are periodically collected and chipped. According to the division's records, the 1997 trees created over 81 tons of wood chips, and diverted that tonnage from the landfill, saving the township over \$4,000 in tipping fees. Currently, the township collects trees that are not recycled with the household trash. Many municipalities in New Jersey have mandated that Christmas trees and brush in general be recycled.

We commend the township for recycling Christmas trees, and encourage the township to continue to expand the program.

Shade Trees

The shade tree division is responsible for the maintenance of all trees on township property and streets. It has four full-time employees, one seasonal employee, plus a supervisor. The salary and wages for this crew were \$175,773, plus \$12,111 in overtime. Other expenses were combined with the public lands division. Accordingly, we estimated other expenditures at \$10,000. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$288,249

Because of staff limitations, the shade tree division confines its operation to abating hazardous conditions, such as trimming dead branches, removing dead trees, and clearing fallen trees from public streets. The division does no tree planting or routine trimming of trees. The division is also responsible for the inspection of new street tree planting done in developments.

The team observed these individuals at work after a major storm. The shade tree employees exhibited a professional and citizen-oriented approach to the residents of the township.

The supervisor reported that the staff had received the necessary training in aerial electrical hazards and tree climbing safety. The supervisor noted that he had a good working relationship with the power company crews, and they cooperated on removing trees with power lines in them.

The shade tree supervisor has successfully integrated computer technology into the operations for staff and project scheduling, as well as producing purchase requests and other documents.

Programs

The department provides recreational programs and special events for children and adults. Some of the programs are provided at no charge to the public, others require a fee. Additionally, the program staff schedules the use of ball fields and issues permits for field use.

In 1998, the program division employed three full-time, one part-time, one seasonal and one director that expended \$204,221 in salaries, wages and benefits, plus \$9,823 in overtime. The department used 68 seasonal and temporary workers ranging from playground staff to arts and crafts instructors with salary and wages totaling \$75,252. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$87,885.

The program staff collects program and permits fees. These fees are deposited with the township treasurer. The staff responsible for collecting registration fees was not knowledgeable about the fees charged for the various programs offered, and referred questions about the fees to the director. The recreation staff was unable to provide any type of data regarding the number of participants in each of the programs. Accordingly, the team was unable to verify that fees were collected for each participant, or to evaluate the value of continuing any particular program. We understand that since our fieldwork the department is collecting information on program participation. Having this statistic will provide improved internal controls and allow the staff to evaluate which programs to offer.

The team commends the new recreation director for her efforts in attempting to improve the department record keeping.

The department schedules many programs at board of education facilities at no cost to the township.

The team commends the recreation department and the board of education for their cooperative use of public facilities.

Fees for programs requiring them are nearly universally \$10 for an adult and \$5 for children. Other communities with which the team is familiar charge substantially more for similar programs, and establish fees for individual programs that more closely reflect the cost of providing the program rather than a uniform fee schedule.

One example of the fees being too low is the summer playground program. Scheduled from June 23 to August 6, 1998, this program is conducted Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at three school locations for a fee of \$15. In 1998, the township enrolled 400 children in

this program. Assuming the township committee were to increase the fee to \$50, the town will realize \$14,000 more a year in recreational revenue for this program. We were not able to compute additional revenue from other program fee increases because records of fees collected and enrollments were not available.

We understand that the director proposed a new fee schedule shortly after our fieldwork.

Recommendation:

We recommend raising fees for the adult and children programs.

Revenue Enhancement: \$14,000

Park Security

The recreation department employs one full-time and two part-time security officers who patrol the recreational and other township properties seven days a week. Those interviewed said the security guards were employed to discourage vandalism and to promptly report problems to the police.

Ice Skating Rink

The Winding River Ice Rink is a partially enclosed, mechanically chilled ice rink located in Winding River Park. Constructed using Green Acres funding, the rink operates seasonally, beginning in October and ending in April each year.

The recreation department operates the ice rink with a full-time manager, full-time secretary and 35 seasonal employees working as monitors, cashiers, and maintenance staff. The 1998 full-time salary, wages and benefits were \$91,333. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$104,284. The seasonal employees' salary and wages were \$88,068. The fully-loaded seasonal wage costs were \$94,808. The other expenses were \$56,362. The total operating cost, not including capital cost of the facility, was \$255,454. The budget report for this division did not include the cost of energy used to operate the facility. Energy costs from most operations are budgeted on a separate line in the current fund budget.

The 1998 revenue generated by the ice skating rink was \$348,578.

The fees for ice skating ranged from \$2.50 for a child to \$5.00 for a family of four with each family member costing \$1.75. Skate rentals cost \$1.75. Five session passes are available at a discount of approximately 20%. Fees for non-residents were generally \$5.00 higher. Fees were also published for various lessons, hockey team programs, and concession items. Ice rink facilities with which the team is familiar are charging \$6.00 for a 1½-hour session, and \$2.00 for skate rental. We were not able to estimate how much a fee increase would generate because detail on attendance at the rink was not available.

Recommendation:

We recommend the township properly apply the cost of energy to each division so costs can be properly allocated.

We recommend the township increase the fees for the ice rink to make it self-supporting and to establish a reserve for replacement and improvements.

In 1998, the ice skating rink manager position, previously combined with the pool manager position, became a full-time position due to the township converting the rink into a summer roller skating rink. This restructuring caused a void at the pool for a manager. The township created a new position of part-time pool manager to staff the pool. The roller skating program that required the full-time position at the rink did not do well. Reportedly, the roller skating program will not continue in 1999. The return to a seasonal ice skating schedule will cause an over-staffing issue.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township return to the previous staffing level.

Cost Saving: Full-time to Part-time Ice Skating Manager \$27,500

Cost Saving: Full-time clerical employee \$35,760

Part-time pool employee: (\$10,400)

WATERFRONT

The Township of Dover operates the publicly-owned ocean and bay front beaches and a public freshwater swimming pool. These operate as a division of the recreation department.

The swimming pool is located at the Snug Harbor recreation center. The pool opens in mid-June and closes after Labor Day. The pool operates with a seasonal manager and two seasonal lifeguards, under the direction of the beach manager. Additionally, two swim team coaches are employed for the season.

The township sells memberships to the pool on a seasonal basis. Daily rates are also available. The pool generated \$38,218 in revenue during 1998. The pool salary and wages and other expenses were embedded in the beach budget. We estimated the salaries and wages with benefits were \$15,849. The other expenses were not estimated.

Recommendation:

We recommend the pool revenue and expenses be segregated from the beach expenses to provide adequate management information.

The Dover Township oceanfront and bay front beaches are an attractive destination for many people living in and visiting the region. During 1997, the beaches generated \$373,940 in revenue, and expended \$279,014 in salary and wages and \$35,595 in other expenses. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$306,043. Accordingly, we compute that the beach is a self-sustaining operation. The significant operation of the utility is seasonal, operating primarily between Memorial Day and Labor Day each year. During 1997, the township sold 26,845 daily badges, and 7,767 seasonal badges. The township also sold 1,989 weekly badges and 866 half-season badges.

The beach operation consists of staffing guard stations along approximately one mile of oceanfront, one pool and two bay locations. The township staffs each lifeguard station with two lifeguards each day. Three guards are on duty at each station of the oceanfront during the weekends. A gate guard attendant is assigned to each opening on the ocean front post to ensure that badges are checked before visitors enter onto the beach. On rainy days the staff conducts training exercises. If guards are not needed on rainy days, they are released for the day with one-half day's pay. A skeleton crew remains on location should there be a change in weather conditions. The beach cleaning staff works seven days per week during the season.

The beach manager provided the team with numerous documents detailing the activity of the lifeguard operation. The records indicated training conducted and the water conditions each day. These records can serve the township well in the event an incident requires investigation later.

The lifeguard manual has a mission statement that establishes the basic operational philosophy of the organization. The manual also established department-specific work rules and responsibilities.

The township has complied with the New Jersey Department of Health requirements to have a lifeguard training program certified by the US Lifesaving Association (USLA). The township has also complied with the other requirements for bathing beaches as specified in the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 8:26-5.1 et. seq.). Training is scheduled as a daily activity and does not result in overtime for the staff. Interviews with the lifeguard staff confirmed that operational procedures, policies, and training required in the lifeguard manual were practiced by the staff and that daily training for both physical conditioning and rescue skills were conducted and records maintained.

During one site visit by the team, a bay lifeguard was observed to be inside a building and not at his station. This incident was called to the attention of the beach manager, and corrective action was taken.

The USLA provides an additional level of certification called "national certification." National certification has been awarded to only five communities in New Jersey and 100 nationally. National certification requires documentation of comprehensive policies concerning the training of lifeguards and operation of the beachfront, particularly in the area of first aid.

Based on our review of the Dover lifeguard training and policies, we believe Dover could achieve national certification. The beach manager may wish to contact the USLA to explore the requirements for this certification. The certification may be of some value in defending the township in the event that a liability claim arises from beach operations.

Lightning is a particular hazard at the beach and other open areas. We discuss lightning and the use of lightning detectors in the golf utility section of this report.

The team commends the recreation department, the beach manager and the staff for their efforts in maintaining the safe beaches and pool.

Recommendation:

We recommend the recreation director investigate the use of lightning detectors.

Value Added Expense: \$800

Facilities

The team visited the pool and the lifeguard headquarters. The pool facility appeared well-maintained, and the staff maintained the required records of water quality.

The lifeguard headquarters is located in a former dwelling on the boardwalk in Ortley Beach. The facility is mostly used for storage, but also serves as a cashier booth for beach badge sales and as the lifeguard office on the second floor. The building is in very poor condition. Recently, the township replaced a few windows. However, the interior needs much of the sheet rock repaired, stairwell handrails replaced, and shelving and other equipment storage provided. Both the interior and exterior need painting.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township more fully evaluate the needs in this building, obtain cost estimates for the work required, and budget funds to begin this work.

GOLF UTILITY

The township operates the Bey Lea Golf Course as a self-sustaining utility under the recreation department. The golf course was a former dairy farm the township acquired and developed as an 18-hole golf course. In addition to a clubhouse, pro shop, and maintenance facilities, the course has several areas of upland and wetland wildlife habitat, and three healthy specimens of the rare American elm tree.

The utility operates a pro shop and leases the operation of a restaurant area. The course operates year-round, except when snow-covered. Several times per year, the facility is rented for private golf outings and is closed to the public. The local high school and college golf teams also use the course.

In 1998, the golf course expended \$569,276 in salaries and wages, including \$15,214 in overtime. The other expenses were \$178,548. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$736,572. The 1998 income from the golf utility was \$1,127,540.

The pro shop operation appeared well-organized. The clubhouse is an aging facility, but was clean and generally appeared well-maintained.

Greens fees are \$13 weekdays and \$15 on weekends for Dover taxpayers. Discounts are offered for students and seniors, and after 4:00 p.m. Golf cart rentals are \$25 for 18 holes and \$15 for nine holes. The township offers seasonal memberships at \$600 for weekday-only and \$750 for unlimited golf. Non-resident's fees are generally double the taxpayer rates.

Other publicly-owned courses with which the team is familiar have fees for residents between \$10 and \$25 on weekdays and between \$13 and \$25 for weekends. With the exception of Cedar Creek in Berkeley Township, all the courses in Ocean, Monmouth, and Burlington Counties charged fees between \$3 and \$12 higher than Bey Lea.

The clubhouse manager had very good records of attendance for the various fee categories. Accordingly, we are able to compute that if greens fees were increased \$2 per patron, the golf utility would generate an additional \$107,616 in revenue. We did not include the golf cart rentals in this calculation. The Bey Lea cart fees are more closely aligned with the fees at other courses, and we compute the cart rentals are returning approximately twice their purchase price over their useful life.

We commend the township for providing an efficient and profitable golfing program.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the green fees be increased by at least \$2 in each category.

Revenue Enhancement: \$107,616

This revenue is needed to fund the various improvements discussed in this section.

The greens, fairways, and other areas of the course were generally well-maintained. The course supervisor has 25 years of experience on this course, and was well-acquainted with the complexities of scheduling work around golfers. The supervisor also appeared very well acquainted with the technical requirements of maintaining the specialized turf grass, irrigation and the hazards associated with the various fertilizers and pesticides used on the course.

Lightning

Lightning is a recognized hazard on golf courses as well as ball fields and water bodies. As a result of recent New Jersey case law, the “act of God” immunity from liability due to lightning strikes that golf course owners enjoyed, now appears to be limited. The Maussner case out of Atlantic County involves a golfer struck by lightning. The court found the golf course had some

responsibility because it did not provide a warning about lightning conditions. The golf course defense, that lightning was an act of God, was apparently discounted by the court because devices now exist that can detect lightning conditions in time to provide a warning to golfers. The assistant emergency management director was acquainted with these devices, and felt they would be equally useful for warnings at the beach and park areas with large open spaces. He estimated this device costs \$800.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the township investigate the use of lightning detectors for the golf course, and generally review the golf course emergency procedures relating to lightning.

Value Added Expense: \$800

Equipment

The golf utility operates many specialized pieces of turf management equipment for grass cutting as well as aerating and seeding. The staff takes obvious pride in keeping the equipment cleaned and serviced. The team was told many items were still in service many years beyond the normal life expectancy.

We commend the golf course supervisor and staff for their conscientious care of the utility equipment.

Purchasing

The staff pointed out areas of the course and buildings that appeared poorly maintained. One storage building that appeared to have been an old farm building had severe structural defects in the block walls. The building was one identified as being available for lightning shelter. Upon inquiry, the golf course supervisor stated that he had been unsuccessful in getting funds approved for capital improvements.

Frustration was expressed concerning routine purchasing. Several greens that had been damaged by a fungus were pointed out to the team. The team was told that in order to protect the specialized turf grasses without using an inordinate amount of pesticides, which are both expensive and toxic, the appropriate material must be used at the correct time. When we inquired why the fungicides were not applied, it was reported to the team that the delay occurred at town hall. A purchase requisition, which had been sent in to the finance department, was approved by the purchasing agent, and the budget line had sufficient funds, yet it had not been released by the CFO. After some additional effort, the purchase order was released, and the fungicide delivered; however, the damage had been done to the greens.

The team was not able to confirm the details of the purchase order in question; however, we noted similar complaints in various departments of the town. The purchasing system is discussed further in the purchasing section of this report.

Some years ago, the township also operated a driving range at Bey Lea. Reportedly, it was a successful operation. The driving range was shut down after the township received complaints of damage from the owners of newly constructed homes adjacent to the range. A portion of the land formerly occupied by the range was leased to a private firm to construct and operate a miniature course. This operation was not successful, and did not operate for the past two years. The lessee has not maintained this area. While the grass in the “rough” area has become overgrown, the superintendent had the foresight to maintain and preserve the fragile greens. The clubhouse manager reported that new lease proposals for the operation of this facility were being solicited.

We commend the superintendent for his forethought in preserving this asset.

B. PARKING AUTHORITY

The Dover Township Parking Authority is a separate governmental agency whose five members are appointed by the township committee. An authority is an autonomous agency with broad powers to employ staff, acquire property, make contracts, and borrow money. Parking enforcement is an integral part of traffic control in the downtown area of Toms River. The parking authority has designed its facilities and enforcement to accommodate employers, commuters and shoppers. The appropriate mix of parking opportunities has played an important role in the revitalization of the downtown area. The authority operates five off-street lots in the downtown area, one parking garage behind Town Hall, and a park & ride commuter lot serving a bus station. NJ Transit and private companies provide bus service to destinations in northern New Jersey, New York City, and Atlantic City.

The authority members are unpaid, and do not receive any health or other benefits from the township or the authority. Authority revenue consists primarily of meter income and administrative fees paid in lieu of summons. Currently, the authority has no outstanding debt, having fully retired the bonds issued for the construction of the parking garage. The team was told the authority has no plans for issuing bonds or notes for the foreseeable future.

The authority employs a full-time administrator, two full-time Parking Violation Officers (PVO), two full-time maintenance persons, two full-time bus depot cashiers and one part-time bus depot bookkeeper. One PVO spends approximately one half of her time doing office work. The authority provides full-time staff with health benefits in the same manner as municipal employees. The part-time staff is not provided with benefits. During 1997, the authority expended \$237,402 in salaries and wages, and \$118,200 in other expenses. The fully-loaded wages costs were \$272,302. The authority revenue for 1997 was \$378,895. Accordingly, during 1997 the authority was not self-sustaining.

The administrator provides overall supervision to the authority employees, administers the annual budget, and prepares both payments to vendors and payroll. Payroll is prepared in-house using a personal computer and commercially available software. The health benefits are administered through the township.

We commend the authority for cooperatively working with the township to obtain a competitive health benefit package.

PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The PVOs enforce both meter violations as well as other parking infractions, such as no parking zone violations both on the street and in the five off-street lots operated by the authority. A vehicle receiving a violation notice has an opportunity to pay an administrative fee to the parking authority within 10 days in lieu of a municipal court summons. Those who do not pay the administrative fee receive a court summons.

The authority operates approximately 1300 parking meters both on the street and in lots. The PVOs monitor the meters using a motorized cart and on foot. The PVOs work staggered shifts. One works 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., spending about half of the day doing work in the office, and the other works 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. This PVO also works Saturdays and takes one day off during the week.

We commend the authority administrator for using creative scheduling to provide parking enforcement for an extended day and on Saturday without incurring significant overtime costs.

The off-street parking provides a combination of metered and permit parking. The authority provides a limited number of free spaces in the former bus depot adjacent to the post office. The authority granted employees of the postal service permission to park on the perimeter streets of the post office for free during the day after an expansion of the post office building eliminated employee parking on site.

Recently, the authority began using electronic summons radio terminals provided by the NJ Administrative Office of the Courts to reduce the courts clerical work generated by summonses, and to more accurately track overtime parking than chalking tires does. This system communicates directly with the State of New Jersey Court Automated Traffic System providing an electronic record of each summons issued. The team observed the system in operation, and found the monitoring feature is more cumbersome than actually chalking tires due to the data entry requirements. This feature does make the preparation of a summons less cumbersome when an overtime violation is found. The system can alert the PVO if a vehicle owner has a warrant outstanding, permitting the PVO to alert the police.

We commend the parking authority and staff for working cooperatively with the NJ Administrative Office of the Courts to implement the use of the electronic summons system.

Penalties

Motorists who have received a violation notice from the PVOs have two options. They can pay the \$11 administrative fee instead of a summons. If the fee is not paid, a summons is issued. The motorist may either pay the summons through the violation bureau or appear in court to contest the summons.

The typical court sanction for a parking summons is \$13. Because the authority is a legally separate body, who collects the fine for a violation is very important to the authority's finances. Should the court collect the fine, the municipality receives the income. If the authority collects the administrative fee, the authority receives the income.

Collections

The chief maintenance staff person collects the money deposited in the meters at least once per week. The team observed the collection and counting routine practiced by the authority.

We have deep concerns over the adequacy of the internal controls established by the authority administration. Chief among these concerns is that the individual who repairs the meters also collects the coins, and handles the coins once delivered to the bank. While we have no reason to believe that the individuals currently employed by the authority have mishandled any funds, we feel strongly that adequate internal controls are an important safeguard for public funds. We are also concerned that an honest employee would not be able to rebut allegations of wrongdoing because the internal control system is so inadequate.

Currently, money deposited into parking meters falls into a locked container. When the money is collected from the meters, a locked pushcart with a keyed receptacle is used to open the container and cause the coins to drop into the locked pushcart. This system is designed to prevent the collection staff from handling the coins. This is an important feature in the internal controls for this type of operation. In Dover, the collection person has the keys to the collection cart, defeating this control. The meters are electronic and have a feature where the amount collected is computed by the meter and can be printed out. We understand the authority does not routinely use this feature. When it is used, the meter repairer who is sent to obtain the reading also has the capability to clear the meter's calculator.

Normally, the team would have expected the pushcart to be taken to the bank. The staff of the bank would have the key to the cart. At the bank, a bank employee and the collection person would, together, open the cart, place the coins into bags, and seal the bags. We would then expect the bank to have the coins counted at its central counting room where at least two bank employees were always present.

In Dover, the authority employee takes the collection cart to the bank through unsecured areas alone. The authority employee empties the coins into coin bags by himself. The bags are left in the bank vault until all the collection routes are complete. The authority employee later counts the coins alone using a coin sorter and counter owned by the authority. The coin counter is

located in the bank in an isolated area of the bank basement. When the coins are counted, they are taken to a teller, and a deposit is made. We understand that the bank then delivers the coins to its central counting room to confirm the amount of the deposit.

During the team's field review of the authority, we noted that the meter collection schedule was adjusted for the collector's vacation such that the designated collection person collected before and after the vacation. The administrator could not recall ever using a substitute collector.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the authority revise its meter collection procedure as follows:

- 1. Prohibit the meter repair staff from collecting from the meters.**
- 2. Have the meter collection performed by the PVOs. The PVOs should verify that each meter has the correct canister in place and empty it into the pushcart. PVOs should not have access to the push cart key. The push cart key should be kept by the bank. PVOs should also obtain each electronic meter calculator printout to verify the bank deposit.**
- 3. At the bank, the PVO and a bank employee should unload the coins into a bank bag and seal the bag. The bank should provide the PVO with a receipt for the bag. The authority should assure itself that the internal control procedures of the bank are adequate for the handling of coins.**
- 4. When the bank returns the validated deposit slip, the administrator should compare the amount collected to the total of the meter calculator slips for the electronic meters.**
- 5. The authority should require that the individuals collecting have their routes alternated periodically.**

During the fieldwork, the team learned that, at times, individuals required temporary longer term on-street parking privileges (such as a contractor working on a building and needing his vehicles on the street in the front of the building). These requests are handled by issuing a permit at a cost approximating the amount that the meter would have collected if it were constantly occupied for the day. The team found this a practical method of accommodating the temporary needs of those individuals. While many of these permit transactions were handled in the authority office, we learned some were handled by the PVOs on the street for the convenience of the permit holder. While we believe no wrongdoing occurred, we feel strongly that this presents not only an internal control concern, but also the opportunity for a grave misunderstanding of the transaction. The permits issued appeared to be unnumbered forms, copied from an original.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the PVOs not collect cash from anyone. Those needing a long-term permit should be directed to the authority office. These permits should be numbered and recorded in a fashion suitable for the authority auditors to perform their audit.

Bus Station

The authority operates a bus ticket office at the park and ride lot near downtown Toms River. The office sells both NJ Transit bus tickets and bus tickets for two private bus lines. The ticket office employs one full-time supervisor/bookkeeper, one full-time ticket agent, three part-time ticket agents, and two part-time janitors. The ticket office is open everyday, except holidays. On weekdays, the office is open from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. On weekends, the office is open approximately four hours per day. The 1997 fully-loaded wage and benefit costs for the bus ticket office were \$109,888. The authority did not itemize the other expenses related solely to the ticket office. We estimate the other expenses related to the bus ticket office and park and ride were \$41,263 in 1997, for a total cost of \$151,151.

The audit reports that bus ticket commissions were \$129,762 in 1997. The decal sales attributed to the ticket office were \$14,378. In addition, the authority earned \$10,729 on vending machine and pay-phone commissions, for a total ticket office income of \$154,869. Assuming our estimate of other expenses approximates the actual expenses, the authority operated the ticket office at a profit of approximately \$3,700.

We commend the authority for operating this division profitably.

The authority provided the team with reports detailing the daily volume of sales each month. The authority did not keep records showing sales by time of day. The monthly report shows that daily sales generally range between \$3,000 and \$4,000, with the exception of several days near the first of each month when monthly pass sales cause the sales to spike. Our observation of the ticket operation during rush hour and non-rush hour times leads us to believe that the ticket office could operate more efficiently.

The commission agreement with NJ Transit does not require a minimum number of operating hours.

Potential Advertising Revenue

The team is familiar with advertising devices attached to parking meter posts in other municipalities that generate revenue for the municipality. Advertising space is reported to generate \$6 per meter per month for the municipality. Installation and capital costs are borne by the advertising firm. Assuming the parking authority permitted advertising on 300 meters, the additional revenue would be \$21,600.

Recommendation:

We recommend the parking authority consider leasing advertising space on meter posts.

Revenue Enhancement: \$21,600

FUTURE OF THE AUTHORITY

The team was told that a separate parking authority was created to allow one group to concentrate on parking issues and enforcement. In addition, creating the authority permitted the issuance of debt outside of the normal debt limitations of the township. This apparently facilitated the construction of the parking garage structure.

The team found that while parking continues to be an important issue in the downtown area, other areas of the township have parking issues at least on a seasonal basis. In addition, a number of functions handled by the authority staff are not unique to the authority. Functions such as payroll, purchasing, accounting, auditing, and legal representation could be handled by other agencies in the municipal government without adding staff. Coupled with the fact that the authority's debt has been retired, we suggest that the township committee reconsider its decision to have a separate parking authority. Any action by the township committee to dissolve the authority should be taken in compliance with N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-20.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the parking authority be re-fashioned as a parking advisory committee. The advisory committee should continue to work not only on downtown Toms River parking issues that arise, but also on parking issues that may need attention in other areas of the township.

Should the township committee adopt this recommendation, we suggest the following reorganization of the various functions in the current authority:

The administrator and the PVOs should be assigned to the police department within the traffic unit. All three should be appointed as Parking Enforcement Officers (PEO) in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A: 9-154.7 et. seq.

These new PEOs should use two vehicles to enforce parking and fire lane violations town-wide.

These PEOs would also be responsible for the weekly collections from the parking meters. In addition, we feel they could also assist as substitute crossing guards.

The parking authority executive director should be transferred to the traffic unit to assist with the supervision of the PEOs. We believe her skills would also be a plus to the traffic bureau generally.

The maintenance function should be transferred to the public works department. Based on our observations, the existing staff should have sufficient time to handle the needed parking facility repairs and assist the public works staff in maintenance functions.

We believe the supervision of the bus station operation would be most appropriately assigned by the township administrator.

The township should consult with the NJ Administrative Office of the Courts regarding the wording of the ordinance establishing any revised parking enforcement agency to avoid problems concerning the continued use of the PATS automated parking summons devices.

C. FIRE SERVICES

Two fire districts govern the fire service in Dover. The voters in each district elect the commissioners for each district. The commissioners prepare an annual budget and tax levy, which is submitted to the district voters the third Saturday in February. The budget year for the districts runs from January 1 to December 31. Each district elects five commissioners, who in turn appoint support staff.

Generally, the fire district budgets provide for the equipment and other support services, such as liability insurance and equipment repairs for the volunteer fire companies within each district. Fire District 1 and Fire District 2 have formed a cooperative service agreement between them to provide for township-wide fire inspection and for a training academy. Fire District 1 has taken the role of lead agency in administering the joint services. The cost for the joint services are apportioned between the two districts based on the aggregate assessed value of each district.

The volunteer fire fighters are organized into six private fire companies operating out of nine fire stations. These private companies in all but one case own the real estate in which the fire trucks and other equipment owned by the fire district are housed. We found that each fire district pays rent to the private fire companies. We discuss the details of the rent agreements more fully under the section for each district.

In 1997, the fire companies responded to 1,739 calls for service, 577 (33.2%) of these being false, unintentional, or nuisance alarms. There were 74 structure fires, 137 vehicle fires, 152 brush fires, 358 odor/smoke investigations, and 441 various other calls for service. The average response time for all fires was 8.2 minutes. A total of 117 staff hours were spent on structure fires. The total staff time spent on all fires was 21,268 hours. Additional detail on hours spent on types of fires was not available. An average of 32 fire fighters responded to the scene of the structure fires. The average number of fire fighters responding to all calls was 16.

The dispatch center records indicate there were only 1,025 fire calls. The discrepancy between the fire district records and the dispatch center records was explained as incidents, typically during major storms, called into the individual fire houses. These calls for service are communicated directly to the fire units, bypassing the dispatch center.

Dover Township's growth has been a challenge for the fire districts and the fire companies due to the increased calls for service and the tendency for new residents in the community not to volunteer for the fire service.

We commend the volunteers of the various fire companies in Dover for their dedication to the citizens of the township. The value of the fire and other emergency services provided by these volunteers is extraordinary. The effectiveness of this active volunteer force in a township the size of Dover is a remarkable achievement.

Fire Protection Rating

The Insurance Service Office (ISO) is an organization upon which property insurers rely for an impartial evaluation of public fire protection. Insurers, in computing property insurance premiums, use the ISO fire rating to quantify the existing fire protection available to property owners. The ISO studies the water supply, distribution system and actual hydrant flow tests, staffing levels, equipment, training and how fire alarms and structured fires are handled.

The current ISO rating for Dover Township is “class four.” The team understands the highest rating available to a community with a volunteer fire service is a “class three.” According to the chief of fire prevention, the last ISO report in 1988 primarily noted deficiencies in water supply in certain areas of town. The chief of fire prevention reports that the areas of concern have been addressed.

An ISO rating deterioration from class four to class five will not affect the hazard insurance premium on a residence; however, a poorer rating may slightly affect the insurance premiums of business establishments. An ISO rating of nine or more will cause homeowner insurance rates to increase and cause burdensome changes to business owners’ premiums.

The next ISO review will be taking place late in 1998 into 1999. The chief fire inspector is confident that the township will fair very well in the review process.

Fund Raising Activities

Each year the various private fire companies and first aid squads conduct fund raising activities, including solicitations of the residents and businesses in the township. The team reviewed the activities using records maintained by the State of New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, Charities Registration Section. We learned that Pleasant Plains Fire Company and Ocean Beach Fire Company had not registered as charitable organizations. N.J.S.A. 45:17A-18 et. seq. requires all charitable organizations that conduct fund raising activities in the state, except for religious and certain educational organizations, to register with and report certain information to the charities registration section.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the private fire companies comply the requirements of the Charities Registration Act, or discontinue fund raising activities.

FIRE DISTRICT #1

Four of the fire companies and six of the fire stations in Dover are located within Fire District #1. Each of the buildings are owned by the respective fire companies which charge the fire district rent to house the fire apparatus and other equipment owned by the district. The fire stations and the equipment assignments are:

- Toms River Fire Company #1:

Main Station, located on Robbins Street, annual rent \$20,754.

Sub-station #1, located on Cardinal Drive, annual rent \$14,136.

Sub-station #2, located on Hooper Avenue, annual rent \$17,334.

- Toms River Fire Company #2, located on Water Street, annual rent \$25,780.

The team notes that the stations on Robbins Street and Water Street are approximately 1,000 yards from each other, located in the downtown section of Toms River.

- Ocean Beach Fire Company, located on Kittiwake Avenue, annual rent \$29,097.
- East Dover Fire Company, located on Fischer Boulevard, annual rent \$27,773.

In addition, the team learned that the fire district has proposed an Ortley Beach Fire Sub-Station to be located on Washington Avenue in Ortley Beach. The proposed location is in a building owned and operated by the Dover MUA. Reportedly, the proposed lease agreement is for \$1 per year.

The district paid a total of \$165,661 in rent during 1997.

The district's emergency vehicles include three chiefs' autos, ten engines (pumpers), three aerial ladder trucks, three extrication trucks, four rescue/scuba units, four brush trucks, three boats, and one hose tender.

Fire District #1 has one full-time business administrator with three full-time clerical staff, one full-time radio technician, and one part-time staff person. In addition to the responsibilities for the administration of the fire district, District 1 serves as the lead agency for the fire prevention unit and fire academy, which are jointly operated between the two fire districts. The district's 1997 salaries and wage expenditures, including the fire prevention bureau, were \$834,698. Additionally, the district expended \$626,048 in fringe benefits, of which \$253,000 was utilized for funding the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP). This program provides an annuity to volunteers based upon their years of service. The district's other expenditures totaled \$2,266,121. The salaries and wages attributable to the commissioners were \$32,220. With benefits, the commissioners' compensation was \$58,213. Two commissioners do not take health benefits.

N.J.S.A. 40A:14-88 requires that any compensation that board members approve for themselves is subject to review by the township governing body. The township clerk reports that fire district commissioner salaries have not been submitted to the governing body for review.

Recommendation:

We recommend the commissioners comply with N.J.S.A. 40:14-88.

The district contracts for legal services, auditing services, administers its own payroll and provides both employees and commissioners with fully paid, full family health benefits. The fire district benefits include medical, dental, and prescription drug coverage. Full family coverage costs \$6,942 per year for each family. The health benefits contract is coordinated with the contract awarded by the township to Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Were the three commissioners taking health benefits required to pay the premium, the district budget could be reduced \$20,826.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the fire district require commissioners receiving health benefits to reimburse the district for the premium.

Cost Savings: \$20,826

Legal

In reviewing the expenditures made by the fire district for 1997 and 1998, the team noted that the district's legal expenses for 1997 were \$132,600. The team learned that \$12,000 of the district's legal services is paid to the attorney as an employee under a retainer agreement. The attorney bills the balance at an hourly rate of \$100. The team found that the attorney was not provided with other employment benefits, with the exception of being in the NJ Public Employees pension system. The district administrator reported to the team that the attorney reimbursed the fire district for the district's portion of the pension contribution each year. In other jurisdictions, contract professionals have been enrolled in the pension system by virtue of a modest retainer that only reflects a small portion of what they are paid. At times, as they approach retirement age, some have shifted increasing amounts of the total compensation into the salary/retainer to enhance their pension benefit. When this happens the pension system bears the cost of an enhanced benefit without the income that would normally have been collected to fund the expense. These costs are passed on to pension system employers statewide through the pension contribution rate. While we have no reason to believe this is occurring or will occur in Fire District 1, the team wanted the commissioners to be aware of the issue.

The team reviewed the legal matters that required the attorney's time in 1997. We found the retainer agreement covered the attorney's attendance at the monthly commissioners' meetings. In addition, the agreement covered this attorney's attendance at the monthly meetings of the joint board of commissioners. During the year, the attorney billed for work on the Ortleigh Beach substation lease, the longevity of service program, and an appeal to the NJ Board of Public Utilities regarding a hydrant rate increase granted to NJ American Water.

Recommendation:

We recommend the fire commissioners review a sample of fees and retainer agreements from other districts and attorneys to assure themselves that the district's agreements are competitive. "Not to exceed" amounts, as well as hourly amounts for work outside the defined scope of responsibilities, should be included.

Purchasing

While reviewing the purchase orders for Fire District #1, the team observed many cellular telephone bills excess of \$300. We learned that cellular telephones are assigned to commissioners and fire company chiefs in addition to pagers and radio-pagers (radio-pagers are pager-like devices that allow the wearer to hear voice communications on the fire radio frequency). When the team reviewed the billing, it appeared from the volume and timing of the calls that many of the calls were of a personal nature and not for district business or emergencies. Some interviewed asserted that the telephones were needed so fire officers could be in contact for emergencies when out of radio range. If a fire officer is out of fire radio range during any emergent situation, the team believes that the officer will not be close enough to respond to the immediate situation. Should telephone contact be necessary, the pager can be used to prompt a return telephone call for which the caller can be reimbursed. We conclude that cellular telephones are not necessary, even for emergencies. The Township Police and Fire District #2 do not provide cell telephones to their supervisors or staff.

Recommendation:

The team recommends that the fire district discontinue taxpayer-provided cellular telephone service immediately.

Cost Savings: \$3,600

The team noted an expenditure of \$11,500 for painting a vehicle. During interviews the team learned that in 1997 a fire commissioner in District #1 directed a vendor supplying a piece of fire apparatus to change the color scheme of the vehicle in contradiction of the bid specs and purchase order. The contractor delivered fire apparatus with the wrong color scheme. The district repainted the vehicle at a cost of \$11,500.

The team believes this expense is an indication that the commissioner did not understand the limitations of his authority to act independently of the commission as a whole.

The fire district pays United Water Company \$197.28 per year for rent on each of the 985 fire hydrants in District 1. This is an annual expense of approximately \$194,320.

During 1998, the team learned that the District #1 Fire Commissioners authorized the purchase of turnout gear and white helmets for commissioners and the business administrator to wear when at a fire scene. These items cost \$1,200 per person. The team understands that those

commissioners who are active in a volunteer company have turnout gear at their company as well. Commissioners who are not active in a fire company have no need for turnout gear, even in the event they choose to visit a fire scene.

The team believes this equipment is unnecessary, and should be returned if possible.

Recommendation:

We recommend returning the unneeded turnout gear.

Cost Savings: \$7,200

During 1997, the district purchased vehicle fuel from commercial vendors. In 1998, the district began purchasing fuel from the township public works department, obtaining a better price due to the township's ability to purchase in large quantity.

We commend the district for using this interlocal service agreement to reduce fuel costs.

Insurance

The district obtains coverage for property and liability insurance from the same Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) to which the township belongs. In addition, it acquires a commercial auto policy. Normally, the JIF would cover all vehicles owned by the district. The JIF will not insure vehicles used for unofficial purposes. The fire district not only provides cars to each fire company chief, but also allows the chiefs to use the vehicles for any personal purpose, including transporting their families. Accordingly, the fire district acquires a commercial auto policy for the six chief cars. This additional insurance is costing the district \$8,026 per year, or \$1,337 per auto. Reportedly, chiefs use the district autos to commute to their place of employment, even if the distance precludes a reasonable response time or their work precludes responding. According to the JIF administrator, adding the six vehicles to the JIF policy would result in a JIF premium increase of approximately \$800 per vehicle.

The team appreciates the time company chiefs spend volunteering in Dover and we understand the value of the chief having a marked vehicle when responding to an alarm; however, we believe that the expansive personal use policy is very costly.

We commend the commissioners for joining the JIF for the district insurance coverage.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the district discontinue permitting the personal use of district autos, and adopt a business-only use policy that complies with the coverage provided by the JIF. Then, the district should add the autos to the JIF policy and cancel the commercial policy. Should the district commissioners wish to compensate the chiefs for responding to alarms or traveling on other district business using their own autos, we recommend using a mileage reimbursement system.

Cost Savings: \$3,226

Personnel

The team noted that employees of the Fire District #1 and the joint fire prevention bureau have eight separate labor agreements with the board of fire commissioners. Upon reviewing these agreements, the team noticed that some agreements had handwritten changes to the agreement in the margin, apparently updating the agreement for an extended term. The parties to the agreement did not initial these changes. The team is concerned that in the event of a misunderstanding, the record of who agreed to what may be limited.

Recommendation:

We recommend that when any contracts are amended, the parties prepare a fresh document to avoid possible interpretation issues later. At a minimum, each person signing the document should initial each written change, and any changes approved at a commission meeting.

Some employee bargaining groups consist of just three people. Two agreements appear to cover just one person each. Having written terms and conditions of employment is valuable; however, we believe that having so many separate agreements is counterproductive, and in the case of the single person bargaining unit, may contradict the National Labor Relations Act.

Recommendation:

We recommend the board of fire commissioners work toward consolidating its various labor agreements to the extent possible.

The team reviewed the district's labor agreements. We found the vacation schedule, which was virtually the same in each agreement, provided the following:

Years of Service	Vacation allowance
One & two	2 weeks
Three through seven	3 weeks
Eight through eleven	4 weeks
Twelve through nineteen	5 weeks
Twenty and over	6 weeks

The team compared the schedule with that negotiated with employees of the State of New Jersey, and found that after the seventh year, the Fire District #1 contracts provided one more week of vacation for employees.

Recommendation:

We recommend the commissioners negotiate a vacation schedule that reduces the vacation allotment by one week in all but the first category.

Each contract contains longevity payments. Beginning after three years of service, the payment is \$300. The maximum payment of \$1,200 begins after 15 years of service. In previous contracts, the longevity schedule was based on a percent of one's base pay.

We commend the commissioners for eliminating the percentage-based longevity, and encourage the commissioners to continue to work towards eliminating longevity.

The district provided 15 days sick leave per year. The unused leave accumulated from year to year. After five years of service if one is leaving the employment of the district he/she can receive full pay for up to 180 days of sick leave.

Recommendations:

We recommend that in future contracts the state's maximum dollar amount of \$15,000 be established for sick leave buy-back only upon retirement.

We recommend that allowing employees to take the time off on "terminal leave" while remaining an active employee receiving benefits be discontinued.

Holidays in each contract ranged from 15 days to 17 days per year. This compares to 15 holidays granted in the township contracts.

Recommendation:

We recommend the commissioners reduce the number of holidays to 15 or less in future contract negotiations.

Some individuals interviewed reported that labor contracts are often negotiated between the fire commissioners and the representatives of the bargaining unit without the input of the supervisory staff. We understand that this oversight has resulted in changes desired by supervisors not being discussed, and language being included that was undesirable to management.

Recommendation:

We recommend that the fire commissioners include the district management and supervisors in the preparation for negotiations, and in the review of the draft contracts.

The district appears to have appropriate personnel policies in place to address the variety of personnel issues. During the team's interviews, we became aware that many of the district employees appeared to be unaware of the existence of these policies. We note that the current case law regarding sexual harassment appears to require employers to not only have a policy, but also train the employees on the application of the policy.

Recommendation:

We recommend the district business administrator provide each employee with a copy of each personnel policy, and note the distribution in each individual's personnel file. Additionally, the administrator may wish to review each policy with the employees.

FIRE DISTRICT #2

Fire District #2 headquarters are in the Warner Street fire station. It is the only station that is owned publicly. The fire companies in the district are:

- Silverton Fire Company, located off Hooper Avenue on Kettlecreek Drive, annual rent \$57,364.
- Pleasant Plains Fire Company -main station located on Clayton Avenue, annual rent \$47,364.
- Pleasant Plains Fire Company - sub-station located on Warner Street.

The district's emergency equipment includes two chiefs' autos, six engines (pumpers), two aerial ladder trucks, two extrication trucks, one rescue/scuba unit, one tanker, four brush trucks, one boat, and two fire police units.

District 2 has two full-time staff. The 1997 salary and wage expenditures were \$102,756. The 1997 other expense expenditures were \$1,143,626. The fully-loaded wage and benefit expenses were \$159,373. The commissioners were paid a total of \$36,000. The commissioners fully-loaded wage costs were \$64,659. Two commissioners declined health benefits.

N.J.S.A. 40A:14-88 requires that any compensation that board members approve for themselves is subject to review by the township governing body. The township clerk's office reports that fire district commissioner salaries have not been submitted to the governing body for review.

Recommendation:

We recommend the commissioners comply with N.J.S.A. 40:14-88.

Additionally, the district contracts for an attorney and an auditor, and administers its own payroll. The district provides fully paid, full family health benefits to its full-time employees and the commissioners. Two commissioners have elected not to accept health benefits. Fire District 2 obtains its health insurance independently of the other public agencies in the township through a local insurance broker. Full family coverage in 1998 cost the district \$8,040 per year. This compares with \$6,942 per year being paid by the township, and \$6,802 per year through state health benefits.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the fire district require commissioners receiving health benefits to reimburse the district for the premium.

Cost Savings: \$24,120

We recommend the district consider joining the State Health Benefits Plan (SHBP) or the township for buying health coverage. We recognize that coverage differences are likely to exist; however, we do not believe the differences are so great as to make changing plans unworkable.

Insurance

The district obtains coverage for property and liability insurance commercially through an insurance agent. American Alternative Insurance Co. issues the district's current policies. American Alternative is a division of American Reinsurance, and has the highest rating available from A.M. Best Co. The fire district provides cars to each fire company chief. The chiefs are permitted to use the vehicles for any personal purpose, including transporting their families. Reportedly, chiefs use the district autos to commute to their place of employment, even if the distance precludes a reasonable response time, or if their work precludes responding. Unlike the chiefs' vehicles in District #1, the team was not able to compute what savings would accrue from instituting a policy prohibiting personal use. Assuming it is similar to District 1, the annual savings would be approximately \$1,830.

The team appreciates the time company chiefs spend volunteering in Dover and we understand the value of the chief having a marked vehicle when responding to an alarm; however, we believe that the expansive personal use policy is costly.

We recommend that the commissioners review the current policy of allowing personal use of district autos and a business-use only policy be adopted.

The team inquired why the district was not participating in the Ocean JIF. The commissioners reported that for fire districts, the JIF set the insurance premium based on the experience of the township and not independently. Accordingly, they found they were able to obtain better rates commercially on their own because the district's claim experience was better than the township's.

We understand that it has been nearly a decade since the district priced coverage from the JIF. Accordingly, we suggest the commissioners may wish to obtain a current quote and a description of coverage from the JIF. As a part of the review of a quote from the JIF, the commissioners should also review the JIF's return of surplus over the previous years as a means of estimating the true cost of insurance.

Labor Agreements

Fire District #2 had no formal labor agreements with its employees. Wages and benefits are negotiated informally, and adopted as a resolution by the commissioners. The resolution provides benefits similar to those provided in District 1.

Purchasing

The team reviewed the purchases made and contracts awarded during 1997 and a portion of 1998. It appeared that the purchases and contracts reviewed all complied with the local public contracts law, and appeared reasonable.

The district paid rent of \$197.28 on 746 hydrants to United Water Co., amounting to \$147,170 in 1998. The district paid its attorney \$14,945 during 1998.

Daytime Staffing

Those interviewed by the team report that daytime response by volunteers has become an increasing problem. At times, alarms are unanswered until repeated. Dispatchers are directed to repeat an alarm at six-minute intervals if the volunteer response is inadequate. This is typical in volunteer departments around the state. More and more volunteers work out of town and are physically not able to respond in a reasonable time, if at all. Additionally, the large volume of nuisance alarms are, understandably, frustrating to volunteers who have left their jobs and homes only to find the alarm is cancelled.

We recommend the fire inspection staff be reorganized to perform fire inspections and serve as first responders to daytime fire calls. The inspector/fire fighters would staff one engine company. Volunteer fire fighters would be summoned for working fires and provide first response during overnight and on weekends. This recommendation is discussed further in the Fire Inspection Bureau section of this report.

Shared Services

The two fire districts jointly operate the fire academy and the fire inspection bureau.

We commend the districts for the use of an interlocal service agreement to operate more efficiently.

Fire Academy

The fire academy building, located next to the public works facility off Church Road, was completed in 1997 at a cost of just under \$1,000,000. The academy is supervised by a volunteer, and uses volunteer and contracted instructors. During 1998, the academy expended \$4,610 for paid instructors. The other expenses for the operation of this facility were limited in 1998 because of the recent completion of the building. The team was not able to obtain debt service information on this facility from the fire districts.

The academy was created to provide local opportunities for firefighters to receive refresher and advanced training. The course for firefighter 1 (the basic training) is already offered at the county college in Dover. The college has an arrangement with nearby facilities for the practical,

live fire portion of the training. We understand that advanced courses are also offered at these area facilities. Accordingly, the team does not see any meaningful opportunity to attract students to firefighter classes. Indeed, the team is puzzled about why the academy was built, as it appears to be redundant to other local public and private facilities.

The academy charges tuition to those attending from outside of Dover. During 1998, the academy offered one training session. The number of tuition-paying students was not reported to the team. The facility consists of two classrooms, a garage capable of housing an engine, and a fire training structure used to practice various fire fighting and rescue techniques. We believe that the fire district can reduce the impact of this operation on the taxpayer by making this facility more widely available to others for training.

The location of the academy could provide a strategic location for an engine company to improve coverage in the surrounding area of the community. We discuss the location of fire equipment further in the fire stations and apparatus section of this report.

We commend the joint district board for operating the academy with volunteers.

Recommendations:

We recommend that the fire districts more fully evaluate the need for major capital expenditures before committing to a project.

We recommend the fire districts actively market the availability of this facility for training, even beyond the fire service.

FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

Organization/Staffing

The bureau is located in Town Hall, and is staffed with one chief fire inspector, an assistant chief, six inspectors who are also qualified as fire fighter I, four code enforcement inspectors, and four clerical support staff. The inspectors complete mandatory inspections throughout the community and perform other related tasks when required.

The 1998 salary and wages for this unit were \$614,517. The other expenses were \$158,398. The fully-loaded wage costs were \$710,325, for a total cost of \$868,723.

The unit conducted 11,300 inspections in 1997 and 12,277 in 1998, a 9% increase. This averages to 1,227 inspections per inspector annually. During 1998, \$390,000 was collected in revenue. In addition, penalties of \$20,000 were levied, resulting in a total revenue of \$410,000.

The fire inspectors who have fire fighter certificates, respond to fires in the event there is an inadequate initial response to an alarm from the volunteer force. Accordingly, they maintain

turnout gear in their autos. On some occasions, when a daytime fire is in progress, the chief of the responding fire company may request fire fighter/inspectors respond to the scene to assist with the fire.

As noted earlier in this report, several individuals interviewed noted the difficulty in finding volunteers to respond to fires that occur during day. We recommended that the fire fighter/inspectors be reorganized to provide first response to daytime alarms. This would reduce the volunteer time responding to false and unintentional alarms and most investigate smoke/odor alarms. If the inspectors confirm a working fire, volunteers could be summoned and would respond knowing that a working fire or other serious incident requires their time.

The team believes that the fire fighter/inspectors have the time available to respond to fire calls along with conducting their inspections, provided the three current code enforcement inspectors in the bureau become certified as fire fighter 1.

Recommendation:

We recommend the fire prevention bureau arrange for the necessary training to have the code inspectors certified as fire fighter 1. We estimate 170 hours of staff time for three people for the training. We did not include tuition, as the training is available through the fire academy at no cost.

The team found that all of the employees interviewed were very knowledgeable and understood their job descriptions. The division had a customer service-oriented approach to the public.

Both the chief inspector and assistant chief appeared very knowledgeable regarding the process of inspections, the training program, life hazard inspections and non-life hazard inspections. Their technical expertise with fire suppression is also extensive.

The fire prevention unit's training approach reinforces the mission statement of the bureau. In addition, the bureau management follows up on the implementation of new procedures to ensure consistent inspections.

The administrators related to the team that they would like to expand their program beyond the normal business day by maintaining one fire inspector to work evening hours, possibly by use of a rotating schedule. The chief inspector believes there is a need to serve the public after normal working hours at various occupancies throughout the township. This would allow inspections to occur at a time that would be more convenient for some business owners.

The inspectors review and inspect construction plans under the UCC, non-life hazard uses and life hazard uses under the fire safety act, and site and sub-division plans under the land use law. They also conduct fire investigations, issue hydrant and trailer permits, and conduct smoke detector inspections.

We make recommendations concerning the reorganization of the fire service, including the bureau, in the future of the fire service section of this report.

Fire Lane Enforcement

The Dover Township Bureau of Fire Prevention enforces the ordinance prohibiting parking in fire lanes. During 1997, the fire inspectors issued 791 summonses, approximately 66 summonses a month. Many of these summonses are issued at the Ocean County Mall during May and December due to the high volume of mall patrons at those times. The revenues for these summonses go directly to the fire districts and the township.

Recommendation:

The team recommends that the parking enforcement functions be transferred to the reorganized parking enforcement officers currently operating out of the parking authority. This will free up the fire fighter/inspectors for other mandatory inspections and answering calls for fire service. The enforcement of fire zone parking regulations could remain a secondary responsibility in their job description.

We discuss the reorganization of the parking enforcement functions further in the parking authority section of this report.

FIRE STATIONS AND APPARATUS

The team reviewed the fire stations and related response area together with the fire apparatus available at each station. The team used the standards promulgated in the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) Manual and ISO to evaluate the Dover Fire Districts. The ISO ideal travel distance for an engine company (one pumper apparatus with fire fighters) is two miles. The ideal travel distance for a ladder company (one aerial truck with fire fighters) is two and one half miles. Accordingly, the placement of fire stations is greatly influenced by these ideal travel distances.

The NFPA established standards for the amount and kind of apparatus needed for response and for reserve to replace equipment out of service. This standard provides that one engine should be provided for 15,000 to 20,000 of population; and one ladder should be provided for every two or three engine companies in a densely developed city, less in more suburban areas. Other more specialized equipment, such as heavy rescue, hazardous material spill response, aircraft or watercraft, may be added as the requirements in the response area and the mission of the department dictate. Accordingly, we compute that Dover's summer population would require nine engines and three ladders.

Historically, the buying patterns of Fire Districts 1 and 2 have been to purchase a new engine each year at \$250,000 and a ladder truck every five years at \$500,000. Assuming these purchases would continue, the fire district would save \$1,750,000 over five years by implementing a program of fleet reduction and not purchasing apparatus.

The team analyzed the response times in Dover Township and the geographic location of the various fire stations and apparatus.

As we noted earlier in this report, two fire stations are both located in the downtown area of Toms River, within several blocks of one another. These stations contain six engines and one ladder.

Historically, locating firehouses close to the majority of structures made sense. The equipment would be close to both the volunteers who typically lived nearby and the majority of structures in the community. Today, with the community having grown beyond the historic downtown, volunteers live in areas away from the town center, and traffic congestion makes travel both to the station and then to the alarm, slower.

Current views on fire station placement prefer having stations located outside of congested areas with volunteers and equipment traveling into the downtown area only when there is an alarm in that area. The location of the remaining stations in Dover is appropriate.

One area of town, near New Hampshire Avenue, is beyond the desired one and a half-mile radius for an engine company. This district can easily remedy this by relocating an existing engine company to the fire academy building. The neighborhood is currently within the two and a half mile radius of a ladder company.

Recommendations:

The team recommends that the fire district discontinue renting the stations located on Water Street and Robbins Street. The equipment that continues to be needed should be relocated to the sub-station on Hooper Avenue.

Cost Savings: \$46,534

We recommend relocating one engine company into the garage at the fire academy building.

The team recommends the districts not replace eight engines and two ladders and redistribute the remaining equipment as equipment is retired.

Cost Savings: \$350,000 annually, for five years

In addition, we recommend that the two District #1 administrative vehicles be removed from the fleet. Those using personal autos on district business can be compensated through a mileage reimbursement.

FUTURE OF THE FIRE SERVICE

It is apparent in analyzing the administrative and operational organization of the fire service in Dover Township that there is a great deal of costly duplication of equipment and effort.

While the team recognizes the voters of Dover Township elected to create two fire districts, the team feels the fire fighting operations could be more efficiently organized. We feel the services should be consolidated in much the same manner as the fire prevention and fire academy operations are consolidated.

Should the voters of Dover Township wish to reconsider the decision to have fire districts, N.J.S.A. 40A:14-91 requires that 5% of the registered voters petition the township committee to consider this question. N.J.S.A. 40:67-23.3 et. seq. places the responsibility to dissolving a fire district with the municipal governing body. We also advise consultation with the local finance board.

Recommendation:

We recommend a comprehensive reorganization of the fire services as follows:

- 1. The entire fire service should be organized under one fire chief, who should also serve as the chief administrator for the fire districts, or as a department head of the township. The proposed fire chief should be responsible for the fire prevention bureau, the fire academy, and the administrative/support/coordination functions now being provided to the volunteer companies by the fire districts.**
- 2. The township using its current staff should provide all payroll, budgetary accounting, and other administrative support functions.**
- 3. The reorganized department will need an assistant chief in charge of inspection and one clerical/support staff person. The chief and staff should be re-located to town hall in the area now occupied by the fire prevention bureau and parking authority, rather than use rented space. This reorganization will allow the reduction of two administrative and two clerical positions. A proposed table of organization is attached (Appendix A) to this report.**

Cost Savings: \$251,315

III. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY REFORM

The final section of the report, Statutory and Regulatory Reform, attempts to identify those areas where existing state regulations or statutory mandates are brought to the attention of the LGBR review team by local officials which appear to have an adverse effect on efficient and cost-effective local operations. It is common for local officials to attribute high costs and increased taxes to “state mandates.” Each review team is then charged with reporting those areas in this section of the report. The findings summarized below will be reviewed by the appropriate state agency for the purpose of initiating constructive change at the state level.

Work First NJ/Welfare Reform

Local officials working in the local welfare office expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of the Work First NJ law regarding individuals who are chronically unemployable. Other professionals at both county and local offices shared the concern that the termination of welfare benefits will result in a small number of individuals who, because of personality disorders, are unable to maintain employment. It is feared that these individuals may become indigent with no recourse.

Fire District Elections

Local officials commented that the date for fire district elections appeared to be an important reason for low voter participation in elections. Officials felt that changing the statutory date for fire district elections to conform to other elections would improve the participation by citizens.

NJ Department of Corrections Street Signs

Local Officials demonstrated that signs purchased from the NJ Department of Corrections had a short life expectancy due to fading. The team observed a local staff person remove the paint from a very faded stop sign with household spray cleaner. The sign was reported to be a year old DEPTCOR sign.

Discovery Fees for State Police

The practice of the municipal prosecutor retaining discovery fees was asserted to be permitted by a January 9, 1991 memorandum from the attorney general’s office. We believe the attorney general’s office should clarify its intent regarding the disposition of discovery fees on State Police cases for all municipal prosecutors.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET REVIEW

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Peter Lawrance, Deputy State Treasurer

Robert J. Mahon, Director, Local Government Budget Review

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PROPOSED DOVER TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

